

= NAOMI KLEIN INTERVIEW, P10 =

THE INDYPENDENT

#226: JULY/AUGUST 2017 • INDYPENDENT.ORG

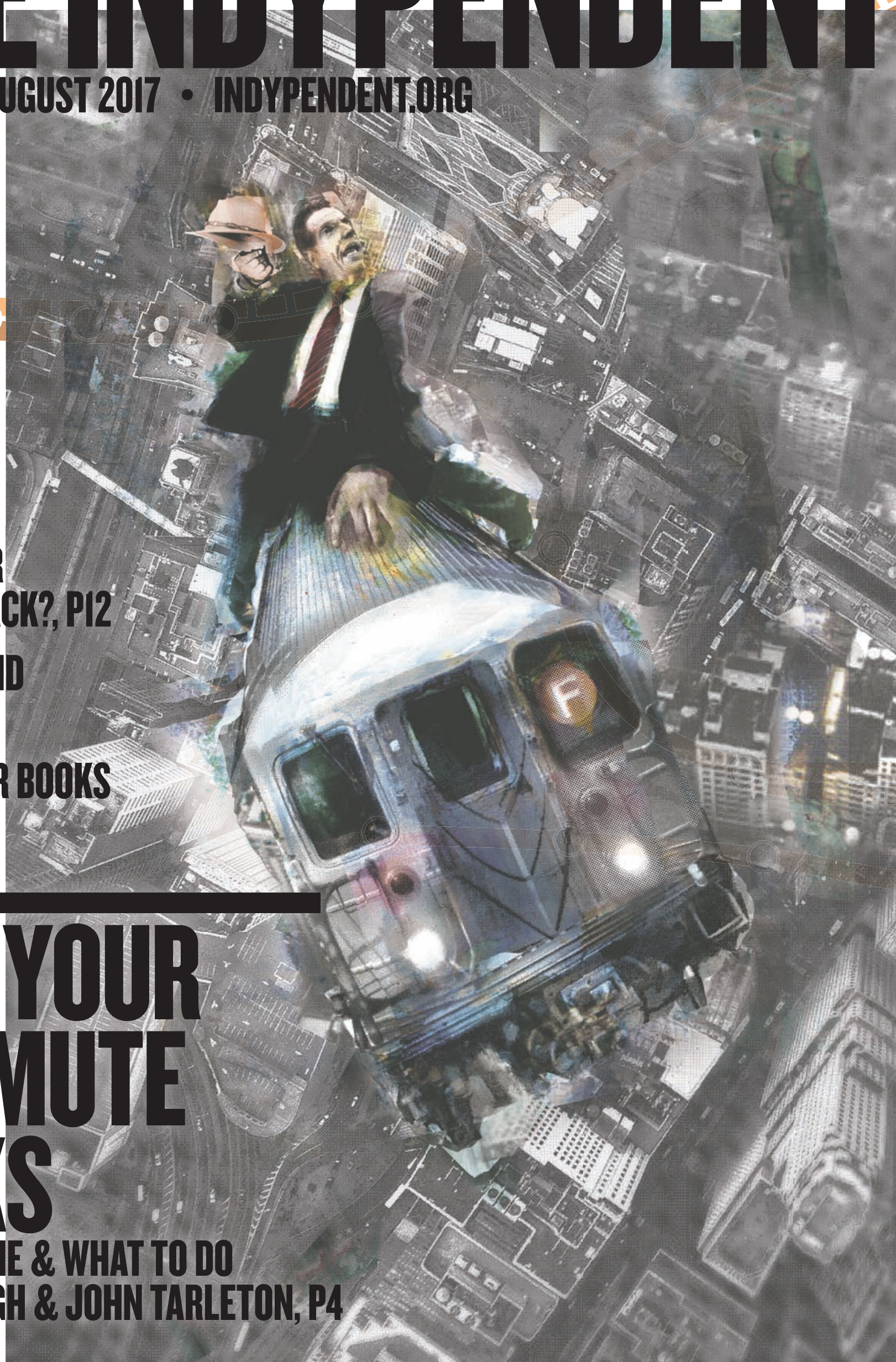
75 YEARS FOR
WEARING BLACK?, P12

STATEN ISLAND
RISING, P14

INDY SUMMER BOOKS
P18

WHY YOUR COMMUTE SUCKS

WHO TO BLAME & WHAT TO DO
BY PETER RUGH & JOHN TARLETON, P4





THE INDYPENDENT



THE INDYPENDENT, INC.
388 Atlantic Avenue, 2nd Floor
Brooklyn, NY 11217
212-904-1282
www.indypendent.org
Twitter: @TheIndypendent
facebook.com/TheIndypendent

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Ellen Davidson, Anna Gold,
Alina Mogilyanskaya, Ann
Schneider, John Tarleton

EDITOR:
John Tarleton

ASSOCIATE EDITOR:
Peter Rugh

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:
Ellen Davidson, Alina
Mogilyanskaya, Nicholas
Powers, Steven Wishnia

ILLUSTRATION DIRECTOR:
Frank Reynoso

DESIGN DIRECTOR:
Mikael Tarkela

DESIGNERS:
Steven Arnerich, Anna Gold

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER:
Elia Gran

INTERN:
Cole Boyd

GENERAL INQUIRIES:
contact@indypendent.org

SUBMISSIONS & NEWS TIPS:
submissions@indypendent.org

ADVERTISING & PROMOTION:
ads@indypendent.org

VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTORS:
Sam Alcott, Linda Martín
Alcott, Gino Barzizza, Bennett
Baumer, José Carmona,
Leia Doran, Renée Feltz,
Lynne Foster, Priscilla
Grim, Lauren Kaori Gurley,
David Hollenbach, Gena
Hymowech, Dondi J, Colin
Kinniburgh, Gary Martin,
Erik McGregor, Mike
Newton, Astha Rajvanshi,
Mark Read, Reverend Billy,
Jesse Rubin, Steven Sherman
Pamela Somers, Gabriella
Szpunt, Leanne Tory-Murphy,
Matthew Wasserman, and
Amy Wolf.

VOLUNTEER DISTRIBUTORS:
Arun Aguiar, Eric Brelsford,
Chris Brown, Pam Brown,
Lew Friedman, Mindy
Gershon, Tami Gold, Zack
Kelaty, Bill Koehnlein,
Michael Korn, Jane LaTour,
and Dave Lippman.

READER'S VOICE

DISGRACEFUL & WRONG

Thank you for publishing this article on the Israeli arms industry ("The Spoils of War," June *Indypendent*). I spent a decade as an officer in the Marine Corps, from 1998 to 2008, and then spent an additional year working for the Department of Defense on counter-suicide bomber technology.

This past year I was able to participate in a Veterans For Peace delegation to Palestine where we witnessed firsthand the apartheid state that exists. As we observed the Israeli occupation forces and talked to both Israelis and Palestinians — including many former Israeli military members — the use of the Palestinian population as laboratory subjects for the Israeli military, police and the armaments industry was apparent. The systematic racism exhibited and utilized by Israeli security forces, codified by Israeli law and security policy, was markedly and viciously demonstrated against the Palestinian people. It is disgraceful and wrong for our federal and state governments, universities and police organizations to be so intertwined in such crimes.

— MATTHEW HOH

ENDS JUSTIFY THE MEANS

Israel is on the front line in a new war being fought today ("The Spoils of War," June *Indypendent*). If the rest of the world can learn from Israel's success, who except those who support terror could object?

— ANON

THE SCUM ALSO RISES

Clueless, freeloading scum ("A New Hotbed of The Resistance: Trump Tower's Fifth Floor," indypendent.org). DEMOCRATS AND LIBERAL TRASH.

— JOE OWENS

FULL COURT PROTEST

Thanks for covering ("75 Years for Protesting in Black?" online and on page 12). I was shocked to learn that at a recent court hearing one of these folks only had one person on court support duty! I know getting to D.C. can be tough, but I'd love to work with people from the J20 protest to make sure that doesn't happen moving forward.

— KIM FRACZEK

FIGHT THE MACHINE

Hi Indy! Kudos from the Sonoran desert!

This fight is about We the People of the Democratic Party versus the party's freeloading, corporate membership ("Will the Democratic Party Open its Doors to Young and Working People?" indypendent.org). It's about a movement, us at the street level, fighting against a malevolent machine, a.k.a. the corporation; an alive, loving humanity, of whom we are

a part, against a tiny cabal of very mean, cruel individuals using all means necessary to oppress the majority.

— BOB ZAVODA

STOP SLAMMING HILLARY

Steven Wishnia's review of *Shattered: Inside Hillary Clinton's Doomed Campaign*, ("How Clintonworld Imploded," June *Indypendent*) extends the authors' thesis that her defeat was ensured by the failure to present a campaign attractive to white working-class voters in larger numbers.

While I agree the Democratic Party can and should forward a platform that will help create decent jobs for working class and middle-class Americans, the causes for Clinton's defeat were more immediate. These included an electoral system that denied victory to the candidate who garnered nearly three-million more votes than her opponent. Close behind this singular abrogation of the principle of majority rule were systematic legislative and administrative maneuvers to depress the turnout of voters favorable to Clinton.

Most egregious, Clinton was subjected to an unprecedented campaign, abetted by the Russian government, of misinformation, innuendos and outright lies, which was tethered to vast social media networks. Suspicion aroused by this campaign among segments of the voting population moved toward outright belief when, 11 days before the election, FBI Director James Comey announced the opening of an investigation into Clinton's work-related emails sent through her personal server.

The absence of indignation in *Shattered* about this extraordinarily undemocratic set of circumstances leading to the defeat of the Democratic Party's first woman nominee should have been addressed in Wishnia's review. Instead of slamming Hillary Clinton, the left needs to turn its attention to confronting and beating back a Republican Party that has become captive to extreme forces of reaction.

— GERALD MEYER

YOU COULD DIE WAITING

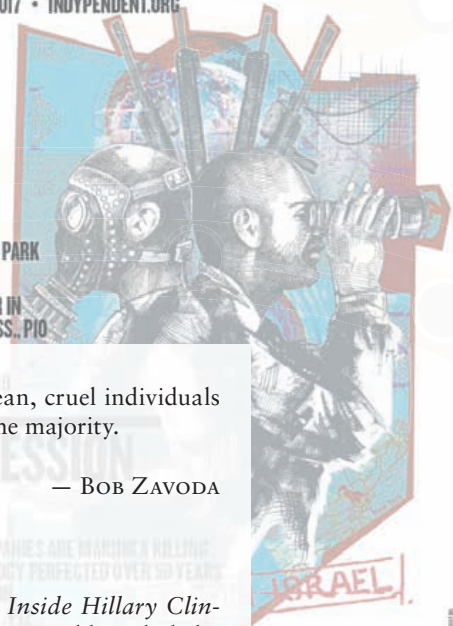
Medicare for all is an excellent plan but it is too ambitious and there are still a lot of things to consider if they really want to make this work ("The Time has Come for Medicare for All," June *Indypendent*). But for now, people will have to be responsible about their healthcare expenses and prepare for it rather than wait for Medicare for all to come to fruition.

— LEANDRO MUELLER

COMMENT ON THE NEWS AT INDYPENDENT.ORG.

HELP KEEP THE INDY GROWING, SEE P23
THE INDYPENDENT
#225: JUNE 2017 • INDYPENDENT.ORG

RED SCARE IN PARK
SLOPE, P4
BLACK POWER IN
JACKSON, MISS., P10



LISTEN TO OUR PODCASTS

INDY AUDIO & INDYSTRUCTIBLE
AT INDYPENDENT.ORG/SECTION/PODCASTS

SIGN UP FOR E-NEWSLETTER AT

INDYPENDENT.ORG
THE INDYPENDENT

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

JULY/AUGUST

PARAMOUNT PICTURES

TUE JULY 11–SAT AUG 13

8PM • FREE

SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK: A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

The course of true love never does run smooth. Lear deBessonet, Founder of The Public Theater's groundbreaking Public Works program, brings her electric theatrical vision to this classic romance about the supernatural nature of love. Visit publictheater.org for ticketing information. Delacorte Theater Central Park

SAT JULY 15

10AM–4PM • FREE

FESTIVAL: CITY OF WATER DAY

Now in its 10th year, this free, family-oriented celebration of the New York-New Jersey waterfront is the region's biggest harbor festival. Highlights include free boat tours on all kinds of vessels, from tall ships to tugboats. Plus free rowing, kayaking and paddleboarding. More info at waterfrontalliance.org. Governor's Island

SUN JULY 16

10PM • \$5–\$10 sliding scale, +21
PARTY: DANCE, DANCE REVOLUTION; ASSATA TAUGHT ME
Assata Shakur, the Black Panther exiled to Cuba, turns 70 on July 16. Join Black Alliance for Just Immigration, Black Lives Matter NYC and Black Youth Project as they celebrate this freedom fighter and twerk for the revolution. DJ Bembona and A D A I R are spinning! It's Lit. Proceeds go to Assata Shakur's family. Starr Bar 214 Starr St.

TUE JULY 18

6PM–9PM • FREE

CONCERT: LOWDOWN HUDSON MUSIC FEST, FEATURING COMMON

The Lowdown returns to downtown, bringing lively, world-class musical talent to the Waterfront Plaza at Brookfield Place. This year's festival will be headlined by Sarah Palin's favorite rapper, Common. 230 Vesey Street

FRI JULY 21

8PM • \$8

CONCERT: DSA BENEFIT
NYC Democratic Socialists of America, Crown Heights Tenant Union and New York Communities for Change are holding a benefit

show featuring Emily Reo, Bears, Will Table and Future Punx DJs. The Silent Barn 603 Bushwick Ave

SAT JULY 22

7PM–10PM • FREE

SCREENING: THE BUS RIDERS UNION

Join fellow public transit riders for a screening of this award-winning documentary about how activists built the Bus Riders Union in Los Angeles and won a fare reduction, more buses to decrease overcrowding and better service to working-class neighborhoods. The screening will be followed by a discussion of how we can organize to win a transit system that works for all New Yorkers. Verso Books 20 Jay St., Suite 1010

THU JULY 27

7PM–8:30PM • FREE

BOOK LAUNCH: VANISHING NEW YORK

Come celebrate the publication of *Vanishing New York: How a Great City Lost Its Soul*. An unflinching chronicle of gentrification in the 21st Century and a love letter to lost New York by Jeremiah Moss, the creator of the popular, incendiary blog *Vanishing New York*. Admission is on a first come, first serve basis. Housing Works Bookstore Cafe 126 Crosby St.

SAT JULY 29

10AM–4PM • FREE

BOOKFAIR: SMALL PRESS FLEA

This summer market sponsored by the National Book Foundation and hosted by BOMB Magazine showcases independent publishers and small presses. Brooklyn Public Library 10 Grand Army Plz.

SAT JULY 29–SUN JULY 30

11AM–6PM • FREE

FESTIVAL: 7TH ANNUAL NEW YORK CITY POETRY FEST
Workshops, bookstalls and three stages of readings and performances. For more info visit newyorkcitypoetryfestival.com. Governor's Island

SUN JULY 30

2PM–6PM • \$5–\$10

MUSIC: BACKYARD HI-FI SESSIONS

Taking inspiration from the yard parties of Kingston, Jamaica and the block party culture of New

York City, Backyard Hi-Fi Sessions explore the connections between hip-hop, reggae and contemporary bass music through the lens of Dub-Stuy's custom-build, 15,000 watt, Jamaican-style sound system. Alongside the music, Backyard Hi-Fi features food, drinks and games spread across both the indoor and outdoor areas of Trans-Pecos. Entry \$5 if you RSVP via events@dub-stuy.com in advance. Trans-Pecos 9-15 Wyckoff Ave.

TUE AUG 1

7PM–9:30PM • FREE

BOOK TALK: APPRENTICED TO VENUS

In 1962, 18-year-old Tristine Rainer was sent on an errand to Anaïs Nin's West Village apartment. The chance meeting changed the course of her life and began her years as Anaïs's apprentice/accomplice. Rainer's *Apprenticed to Venus: My Secret Life with Anaïs Nin* stories her deep friendship with the pivotal historical figure. Bluestockings 172 Allen Street

WED AUG 2

1PM–3PM • FREE

HOME AND GARDEN: RADICAL GARDENERS NYC OPEN HOURS

Visit Radical Gardeners' seed library at The Base community center. Swap garden stories, plants and materials. Tend to indoor and street gardens over tea and snacks. Radical Gardeners NYC is an anti-capitalist garden network working collectively with existing or new garden spaces. It offers free seeds, soil and building materials. In exchange, a portion of what is grown is harvested for food sharing programs at The Base. The Base 1302 Myrtle Ave.

WED AUG 2

8PM–11PM • FREE

SCREENING: THE WARRIORS

Indulge at Brooklyn Bazaar's bar and restaurant while you enjoy this campy New York classic. Brooklyn Bazaar 150 Greenpoint Ave

THU AUG 3

7:30PM–10:30PM • FREE

PERFORMANCE: BOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD

Join a passionate group of performers as they trace the evolution

of Bollywood, from black-and-white classics to colorful blockbusters and bring the spirit and romance of India's palaces, mountain vistas and sweeping mustard fields to Damrosch Park. Damrosch Park 165 W 65th St.

THU AUG 3

10:30PM–12:30AM • FREE

SCREENING: THE BIG LEBOWSKI "SILENT" MOVIE

Fans will accessorize their bowling shirts and bathrobes with headphones at this open-air "silent" screening of the Coen Brothers' cult comedy; an absurd tale of mistaken identity, bowling, White Russians, anger management issues, kidnapping, pornography, nihilists and, of course, His Dudeness — all while gathered together under the stars (and the big screen). Damrosch Park 165 W 65th St.

SAT AUG 5

4PM–4AM • Give give what you can
PARTY: BEER, PIZZA, SOLIDARITY

Over 200 people were arrested during anti-capitalist, anti-fascist protests in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 20. Inauguration day (see page 12). Many of those arrested are now facing decades in prison. In order to raise funds for the J20 defendants, the New York City General Defense Committee is hosting a pizza party at Rebecca's in Bushwick. Come for the solidarity, stay for the drinks, pizza and jamz. There'll be free pizza from Norbert's between 4 PM and 5 PM, so show up early! Rebecca's 610 Bushwick Ave.

SAT AUG 12

2PM–7PM • \$25 advanced, \$34 day of

EXHIBIT: BASQUIAT & BRUNCH

An exhibition-style brunch, featuring contemporary art lightly inspired by the amazing and infamous, Jean-Michel Basquiat. Delicious cuisine and unlimited mimosas served until 5 PM. 1103 Fulton St.

COME OUT AND

PLAAAY: You think your commute is rotten? Try making it back to your home turf with every gang in the city out for you. Catch The Warriors at Brooklyn Bazaar on Aug. 2.

BLACK PANTHER

PARTY: Celebrate the birthday of exiled Black Power revolutionary Assata Shakur at Starr Bar on July 16. Proceeds support her family.

MTA OFF THE RAILS

DECADES OF NEGLECT HAVE LEFT THE SUBWAY SYSTEM IN SHAMBLES. CAN ANDREW CUOMO SOLVE THE MESS HE'S DONE SO MUCH TO CREATE?

BY PETER RUGH

I always thought it would be nerve-gas or a nuclear bomb that brought down the city of New York. But perhaps the worst threat is internal: The thread that holds this city together will simply unravel, rip and give way under the strain of neglect.

There were glaring signs of the coming collapse in June. Reports of passengers jumping out of stranded subway trains and making it to stations on foot. The words “I will survive” scrawled in the fog of human body heat coagulating on the windows of a packed, air-conditioner-less F train dead on the tracks. An A train smoking off the rails with 800 riders on board.

We hardened New Yorkers can handle swastika-scrawling graffiti artists, dadaists hawking live crickets, break-dancers swinging their sneakers within inches of our skulls, doomsday preachers hollering at the top of their lungs. We can coexist remarkably well with all manner of odorous bodily discharge and vermin that crawl and ooze about our feet under the jaundice-lamps beneath the earth. We've learned to bear the cross that is our daily commute with a sigh, to gaze vacantly into infinity until it's over. Delays, now and then — not a problem. But more and more, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is failing to accomplish its basic mission: To take New Yorkers from point A to point B safely and faster than a horse-drawn omnibus.

Why do our commutes suck? Our 113-year-old subway system has been underfunded for decades. It moves 5.6 million passengers per day using technology that dates back to before World War II. Rather than modernizing, the MTA is accumulating debt and spending billions of dollars on superficial alterations, quick fixes and projects that provide photo opportunities to politicians but do little to address its systemic weaknesses. While the number of delays each month has climbed to 70,000 — up from 28,000 five years ago — one out of every five dollars the MTA spends from its operating budget goes to servicing debt on capital bonds.

A lack of accountability and long-term planning has plagued the MTA since its founding. This has meant that spending all too often follows the whims of constituencies that have the most clout beyond the ballot — real-estate developers, big construction firms, construction unions and the finance companies that underwrite the MTA's bonds and profit handsomely.

In May, the authority released a six-point plan to improve service. Don't get your hopes up.

“WHO'S IN CHARGE?”

The plan allocates \$20 million on top of the current capital budget for improvements like new subway cars, increased inspections, new track and more emergency responders to treat sick passengers. But signifying its real priorities, the MTA issued \$1.6 billion in bonds that same month, adding \$5 billion more to its already bloated \$38 billion debt load. Instead of improving service, the money raised will go towards blockbuster expenditures like extending the Second Avenue subway and polishing our transit turd by beautifying stations — all priorities of Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

Mayor Bill de Blasio gets a lot of flack from New Yorkers over the subway's deteriorated state, most riders do not understand that it is actually the governor's office that has the most sway over the MTA. Their confusion is understandable.

“Who's in charge?” Cuomo asked on June 22.

“Who knows! Maybe the county executive, maybe the president, maybe the governor, maybe the mayor.”

Cuomo was hyping his last-minute proposal to have the state legislature grant him a controlling stake on the MTA's board. But the governor already appoints six of the board's 14 members, including its chair. Together with members from the counties surrounding the city — mostly plucked from local chambers of commerce and corporate law firms — Cuomo has a working majority on the board. He has the strongest grip on the authority's purse strings as well. It was his brilliant idea to cut \$65 million from the MTA's budget this year, for instance.

The fact that Cuomo did not submit the bill to give him control of the MTA until the end of the legislative session indicates that his proposal wasn't serious. He also called on Mayor de Blasio and the city to match state contributions to the authority. Currently, the state chips in about \$32 billion and the city \$8 billion towards the MTA's five-year capital plan. If he had actually received what he supposedly wished for, that too would have been a win for Cuomo. Upstate lawmakers are loath to meet the MTA's budgetary needs. Cuomo's bill would have

THE EDIFICE COMPLEX

Imagine you're a politician presiding over a crumbling subway system. You have two choices. You can put your nose to the grindstone and make sure the needed resources are made available to keep the existing system in good repair and have it modernized as quickly as possible. Or, you can ignore the boring stuff you won't get credit for anyway and throw billions of dollars at exciting new mega-projects that will make your well-heeled buddies in finance, real estate and construction happy while creating exciting new photo opportunities for you to partake in. Which would you choose?

In New York, the choice is always the same and the governor and the MTA aren't the only culprits. The merits of these various mega-projects vary, but some things they have in common is they cost a fortune and almost always come in years late and wildly over budget. Here's a look at a few of them.

2ND AVENUE SUBWAY

The long-dormant Second Avenue subway project was revived in 2007 and became operational at the beginning of 2017. For \$4.45 billion, the Q train was extended by two miles from 63rd to 96th Street and created a windfall for Upper East Side real estate interests.

Not content to rest on its very expensive laurels, the MTA is moving forward with plans for the second phase of Second Avenue subway construction, which will extend the line by another 1.7 miles from 96th to 125th Street by 2029. The current price tag: \$6 billion. At roughly \$3.5 billion per mile, this will surpass the costs of the just-completed first phase and will set a new world record for subway construction costs, according to Alon Levy of the Pedestrian Observations blog. He concludes, “At \$6 billion this line shouldn't be built.”

EAST END ACCESS

This MTA mega-project will provide a direct connection to the Second Avenue subway and Grand Central Station for Long Island Railroad (LIRR) passengers who currently use Penn Station. Begun in the waning days of the Clinton administration, the East End Access project was supposed to be finished by 2009 at a cost of \$4.3 billion. After years of setbacks, it is now projected to be finished in 2023 at a cost of more than \$10 billion and will serve even fewer people per day than the three stations that comprise the Second Avenue subway. One driver in the cost overruns has been MTA's decision to build a whole new set of tracks and platforms for LIRR trains beneath Grand Central's existing 44 platforms and 67 tracks, which are currently used by Metro-North. According to Business Insider, the final cost of building these new tracks rather than sharing the existing ones is expected to be close to \$2 billion.

7TH AVENUE EXTENSION

Located on the far west side of Manhattan, Hudson Yards is New York's newest neighborhood and the embodiment of former Mayor Michael Bloomberg's neoliberal vision of New York as a “luxury city.” When construction is complete, the site will have more than 18 million square feet of commercial and residential space, state-of-the-art office towers, more than 100 shops, approximately 4,000 residences and a luxury hotel with more than 200 rooms. But none of this would be possible without access to mass transit.

Unable to garner financial support from the MTA — because it answers to the governor, not the mayor — Bloomberg had the city pay the full \$2.37 billion to extend the 7 train from Times Square to Hudson Yards. As originally promoted, the 7 train extension would go from Times Square to 42nd Street and 10th Avenue in the heart of the Off-Broadway theater district and then down to its final destination at 33rd Street and 11th Avenue. But as the cost overruns piled up, the

promise of a theater district stop was shelved and the extension became a one-station affair, which was finally completed in 2015.

WORLD TRADE CENTER TRANSPORTATION HUB

In the aftermath of 9/11, New York's leaders wanted the reconstruction of the World Trade Center's transit hub to become a civic icon. Famed Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava's exotic design for the station was supposed to embody the wings of a bird taking flight. As the cost of fulfilling this vision spiraled upward, the bird transformed into a white elephant. When the new transit hub was completed in 2016, the final cost was nearly \$4 billion, making it the world's most expensive train station. The site was built and developed by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which is jointly controlled by the governors of the two states.

BROOKLYN-QUEENS CONNECTOR (BQX)

Not to be outdone by his rival in Albany, Mayor Bill de Blasio jumped into the mega-project sweepstakes last year with a proposal for a \$2.5 billion streetcar line that would travel from Astoria, Queens, to Sunset Park, Brooklyn. Critics have dubbed it the “gentrification express” whose real purpose is to inflate waterfront real estate values. The project would allegedly pay for itself with a \$2.75 fare, but a leaked memo from de Blasio's BQX advisors suggested the actual price tag could be much higher. And, because of its proximity to the East River, much of the line would be vulnerable to flooding in the event of another storm like Hurricane Sandy.

— JOHN TARLETON





HONNY LLOCS

meant the city contributing more than twice as much to the MTA as it does now while possessing even less control over it.

It's anyone's guess what Cuomo hates more: funding the MTA or taking responsibility for it.

"The MTA is a state-run agency and the ultimate executive of that is Gov. Cuomo," says Masha Burina of the Riders Alliance, a 1,000-member straphanger advocacy group. "The state has been steadily removing funds from the transit authority. It's indicative of a reluctance to invest in this public good."

THE COLLAPSE

A citizen lobbying effort the Riders Alliance initiated was instrumental in halting the governor's yearly habit of removing funds from the MTA's operating budget and putting the money towards its general debt-service fund. Cuomo removed \$270 million from the MTA's operating budget in his first term, between the 2011 and 2015 fiscal years. The money went to servicing debt that the MTA was forced to accumulate because of a lack of state funding.

Meanwhile, the MTA has squandered the funds that haven't been raided, spending lavishly on multibillion-dollar ventures dear to the governor's heart like the new subway for the Upper East Side, accumulating more debt in the process.

"Real estate is the only reason that the Second Avenue extension was built," says Tom Angotti, professor emeritus of urban planning at Hunter College and the CUNY Graduate Center. "It was supported by a political base which is largely real-estate interests on the Upper East Side, the most expensive real estate in New York City and perhaps in the world. Adding that stub of a subway line jacks up land values, property values, rents and potential profits. Development opportunities become more abundant in the area."

The cost of the Second Avenue subway at this point — three new stops near Millionaire's Row and refurbishing of the station at Lexington Avenue and 63rd Street? \$4.45 billion.

The extension of the 7 line to Hudson Yards is another money pit the MTA has dug its gilded shovel into. "That was an expensive stub essentially for billionaires and millionaires and very well-paid people, financed through a public-private partnership," says Angotti.

Cuomo gets a pass on that boondoggle. It was the brainchild of our billionaire former mayor, Michael Bloomberg. Under his administration, the city's Economic Development Corporation issued the bonds that paid for the \$2.37 billion extension, just one station at 34th Street and 11th Avenue.

"We have taken on projects that have been expensive," MTA board member James Vitiello lamented at the board's monthly meeting in June. "I think we're coming around to seeing we may have done some of that at the expense of day-to-day maintenance. We're adding new rooms to a house that had a roof falling in and water in the basement."

Some observers, however, contend there is a false equivalency in this analogy.

"Why should we have to choose between the continued improvement of what we already have and additions to a system that hasn't

seen a lot of additions really since the 1940s?" asks subway historian Clifton Hood, defending the capital expenditures. "I think that's absolutely false thinking that buys into this ideology that we have to choose one or the other. There's a lot of waterfront development happening now."

But "waterfront redevelopment" is often code for upscaling undervalued real estate and longtime dockside residents are fighting plans for luxury high-rises from the Bronx to Sunset Park. Opponents of the recent subway expansions aren't against extending the system. They just want it to extend to meet real needs.

"We need a bigger vision for how the transportation system is going to be expanded throughout the city, but also expanded in terms of its capacity," says Masha Burina. "That means buying new train cars, laying down new tracks. We need to actually invest in purchasing these capital goods."

Most important, the subway needs a new signaling system. Its current assemblage of mechanical levers, glass-encased switches and cloth-clad wiring is prone to breakdowns. Even when they're functioning, the signals slow down service by forcing the MTA to maintain a safe distance between trains. Since it's impossible to determine precisely where trains are at any given time, transit workers log their locations with pen and paper. The MTA's program to

TROUBLE ALL THE WAY

DOWN THE LINE: Waiting for the 4/5 train at Union Square. Subway delays have more than doubled over the past half-decade while the price of the ride continues to rise.

IT'S ANYONE'S GUESS WHAT THE GOVERNOR HATES MORE: FUNDING THE MTA OR TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT.

update the signals is on a pace to be completed in 50 years. Only the signals on the L line have been entirely upgraded since it began, and the L will be shutting down between Brooklyn and Manhattan in April 2019 for 15 months of repairs.

"There's room for us to begin enacting a multitude of solutions to the city's transit woes," says Burina. "That would include improving the system as it is so that trains are more reliable, so that the number of delays decreases and crowding on platforms and inside the subway cars is addressed. But, at the same time, we should be thinking about where we are headed as a city when it comes to our growth and development, and really consider what does it mean to have an inclusive transit system that can address [the needs of] and be accessible to New Yorkers everywhere."

LUXURY CITY

That's a nice thought, but putting it into reality would first require Cuomo to gird his loins and take responsibility for the MTA. In late June, the governor, who is up for re-election next year, declared a "state of emergency" and directed the authority to draft a plan to

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

address the mounting delays within 30 days. (In the spring, he'd offered \$1 million in genius grants to anyone who could provide a plausible quick fix.) Joseph Lhota, Cuomo's newly appointed MTA chair, will be the man holding the mop. Lhota won accolades during his previous tenure as chair for steering the authority through Superstorm Sandy, but he left the post after less than a year to run for mayor in 2013 as a Republican.

"Joe Lhota is a respected professional who has valuable experience as MTA chair," Riders Alliance executive director John Raskin said in a statement. "The question remains, what is the governor's plan to fix the subway, and will he give Chairman Lhota the funding he needs to get the job done?"

Lhota will not work full-time as the chair. He wants to keep his day job as an executive at NYU Langone Medical Center, a \$1 million-plus per year position.

City officials, particularly Mayor de Blasio, bear some responsibility for the subway clusterfuck too. The city, for instance, could free up more traffic lanes for express buses, which would ease the burden on the subway system. Instead, de Blasio, like Bloomberg, has his eyes on costly waterfront development. His administration has approved tax breaks exceeding half a billion dollars for high-rise developers surrounding the Hudson Yards site — but the mayor's personal pet transportation project is the BQX, a \$2.5 billion trolley system that would run along the waterfront and connect Astoria to Sunset Park. The project would allegedly pay for itself with a \$2.75 fare, but a leaked memo from de Blasio's BQX advisors suggested the actual price tag could be much higher. Construction costs alone, the memo projected, will rise by \$100 million a year due to inflation.

The trolley won't "serve the transportation needs of the vast majority of people living in Brooklyn and Queens," says Angotti, co-author of *Zoned Out! Race, Displacement and City Planning in New York City*. "Again, it's planning transportation around real-estate speculation."

Angotti also takes issue with the city's habit of allowing luxury high-rises to be built on top of major transit hubs. Nearly one in three of the city's most expensive apartments sit empty for at least 10 months out of the year. Why is the city squandering its housing stock by providing easy public transit access for rich ghosts who prefer to be elsewhere?

"We have to stop believing in the myth that there is this invisible population of people with a lot of money who are coming to New York City and the city is obligated to provide them housing, transportation and services," says Angotti. "That was the Bloomberg Luxury City myth. The biggest vacancy rates in New York City are in luxury housing. They're not being built to meet people's transportation needs. They're being built as vertical safe-deposit boxes."

RECLAIMING OUR SUBWAY

For a brief period, beginning in 1940, the subways were actually operated by the city.

"I've gone through those records, and you can see City Councilmen got letters from constituents complaining that the buses now stopped every four blocks instead of every two blocks," said Clifton Hood. "That's a legitimate thing to complain about, because if you're 80 years old or if you're a mother with two kids in a stroller, walking four blocks instead of two blocks is a real handicap. Their feet were really put to the fire, and that doesn't exist anymore."

From its earliest inception as the New York City Transit Authority in 1953 — it was put under the MTA umbrella in the 1960s — the authority structure was established "to insulate politicians from accountability for what is an extremely expensive system," says Hood. "What you could say is the problem with the subways in New York City is that they are extremely expensive, there is a lot of public demand for good service and cheap service, and yet there is not the wherewithal to provide the funds from anybody for that service."

Public transit — like health care, public housing, higher education, public broadcasting, and the Post Office — was once thought of as a costly but necessary service for the general good. Now it is looked upon as a burden to taxpayers, expected to be sustainable on its own, though it lacks the capability to do so. Nobody in Washington, Albany or City Hall wants to fund the MTA or be accountable for its mounting shortcomings. In the absence of any significant



STUFFED: New Yorkers are getting close to each other on their commutes these days. *Real close.*

UNDERGROUND HISTORY

The subway transformed New York City and has become an indispensable part of daily life over the past century. However, for much of that time the public has had little say in how the system is run and on whose behalf.

1900–1904

Fifty-four mostly immigrant workers are killed during the construction of the city's first underground subway line which runs from City Hall to West 145th Street via Grand Central Station and Times Square.

OCTOBER 1904

With a trainload of dignitaries on board, NYC Mayor George McClellan drives the subway at top speeds of 40 mph on its maiden voyage from City Hall to W. 145th St. Fast, clean and modern, the new subway is wildly popular with a public accustomed to often slow and cumbersome travel above ground. The subway is operated by the Interborough Rapid Transit Company (IRT), a private and monopolistic entity founded by the financier August Belmont.

1913

A second massive wave of subway construction is initiated by the city. The IRT will come to operate what are now the 1-2-3-4-5-6-7 trains while another private company, the Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit Corporation (BMT), will oversee what is today the J-L-M-N-Q-R-W-Z trains.

1925

With public anger growing at the greed of the IRT and BMT monopolies, construction begins on a third subway system, the city-owned and operated IND, or Independent Subway System, which will become what are today the A-B-C-D-E-F-G trains.

1932

The first branch of the Eighth Avenue subway opens and a burst of subway construction on the IND continues through the decade. This activity is spurred on by generous federal funding provided through the New Deal.

1940

The city buys out the IRT and BMT and unifies the subway system under its control. Construction of new subway lines largely comes to a halt. After World War II, transportation funding for New York will be largely directed toward highway construction instead of supporting mass transit.

1948

The nickel fare — instituted in 1904 — is rescinded and the cost of a subway ride doubles to 10 cents, sparking public outrage.

1953

With the subways' finances faltering as automobile usage increases, the state government places the system under the control of the New York City Transit Authority, which is designed to be immune from public pressure.



SCOTT LYNCH

voter pressure, our political system operates in default mode, retooling a public benefit to satisfy the whims of a wealthy minority.

Once upon a time, the interests of real-estate tycoons and other corporate elites went nearly hand in hand with those of the workaday straphanger. In order to support New York's extraordinary commercial growth — fueled in the 19th century by the export of slave-picked cotton and maintained into the 20th Century by a continuous supply of hungry immigrants — the city's housing stock had to expand. Land speculators were only happy to oblige, and employers needed a way to transport their growing workforce to downtown docks and factories.

"Where are the business foundations and major corporations based in New York City?" asks Hood. "Where are the major New York City corporate-law firms, which, after all, have a lot of money and a lot of clout, with respect to what's going on with the subway?"

Noisy complaints from business leaders helped rescue the MTA in the 1980s when, as novelist Paul Theroux described it, the subway had "the filthiest trains, the most bizarre graffiti, the noisiest wheels, the craziest passengers, the most macabre crimes," and, one might add, the least dependable service in its existence. Hood blames Reaganism for the idea

Continued on next page

1968

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority is born as Gov. Nelson Rockefeller folds the NYC Transit Authority into a new regional transportation behemoth that includes the LIRR, Metro-North and the bridge and tunnel empire previously under the control of Robert Moses.

1980s

With an infusion of fresh government support, the subway system's decades-long decline is reversed as every mile of main line track is rebuilt and a new fleet of cars introduced.

1994

Republicans seize control of Congress and the governor's mansion in Albany and slash federal and state funding for MTA capital projects. The MTA makes up the difference by issuing billions of dollars in bonds. The bonds are to be repaid by raiding the farebox that finances the day-to-day operating budget, a practice that continues to this day. Regular fare hikes become the norm.

2011

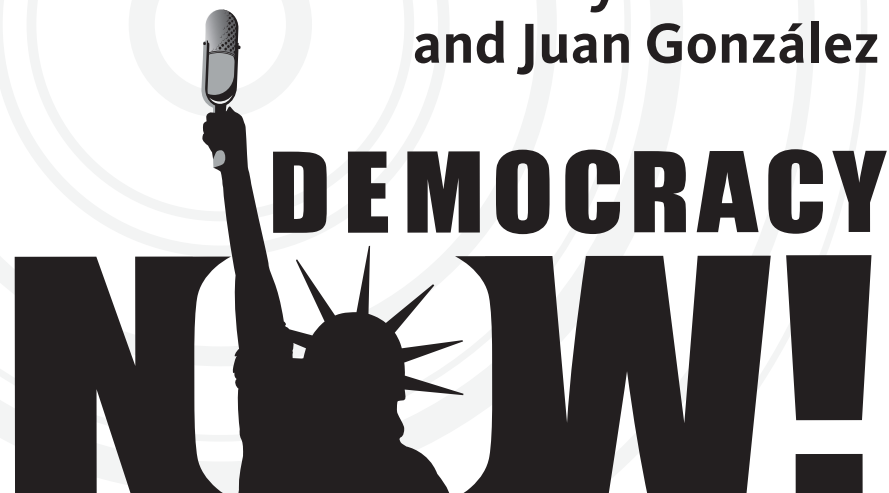
Newly elected governor Andrew Cuomo takes office and initiates a yearly practice of raiding MTA funds to pay for other budget items. Essential maintenance is deferred and efforts to install a modern signal system precede at a snail's pace.

2012-2017

Monthly service delays more than double as decades of deferred maintenance take its toll. With the much ballyhooed Second Avenue subway line set to go into service on January 1, 2017, Gov. Cuomo attends a New Year's Eve celebration at the new 72nd Street station and then boards the Q train for an inaugural ride. "This is New York," Cuomo tells gathered reporters, "and there is nothing we can't do when we put our mind to it."

— INDYPENDENT STAFF

A Daily Independent Global News Hour with Amy Goodman and Juan González



DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG

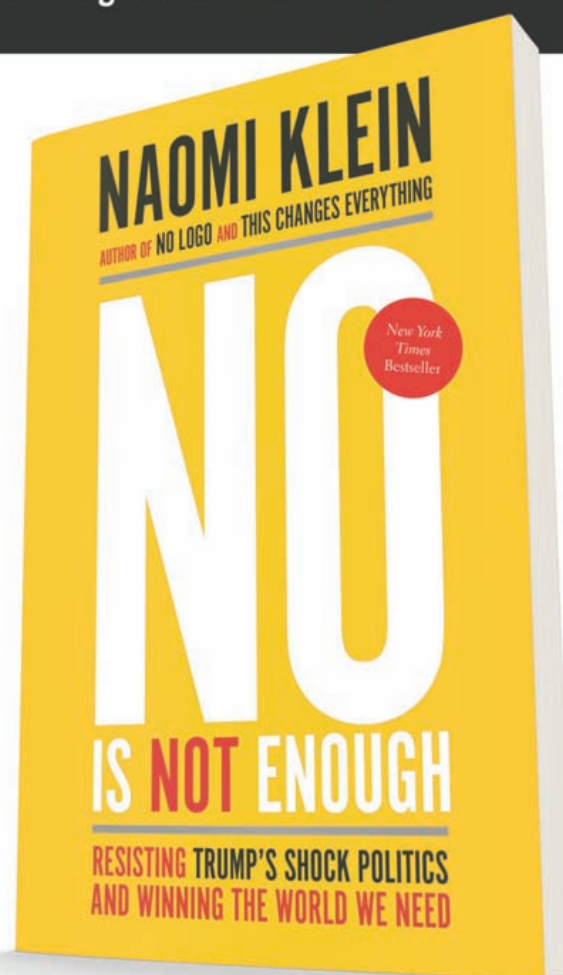
Tune In Live Every Weekday 8-9am ET

- Audio, Video, Transcripts, Podcasts
- Los titulares de Hoy (*headlines in Spanish*)
- Find your local broadcast station and schedule
- **Subscribe to the Daily News Digest**

Follow Us @ DEMOCRACYNOW



A road map to resistance in the Trump era
from internationally acclaimed journalist, activist,
and bestselling author **Naomi Klein**.



"Klein . . . has become the most visible and influential figure on the American left—what Howard Zinn and Noam Chomsky were thirty years ago."

—The New Yorker

 **HaymarketBooks**
haymarketbooks.org



SCOTT LYNCH

Continued from previous page

that “we should starve the public sector.”

Another lingering question: Where is the Transport Workers Union? Their working conditions are our riding conditions.

In an email to *The Independent*, TWU Local 100 spokesperson Jim Gannon blamed the subway trouble on a “confluence of factors” including the system’s advanced age and the need to conduct repairs overnight and clear out before the morning rush. The “MTA’s capital plan is good and totally necessary, but the result won’t be felt for some years to come,” he wrote. “We’ve been pressing for more money to be sunk into the operating budget which could then be used for maintenance of the current system. There’s no easy answer.”

On June 27, when secured pieces of rail, loosened by tunnel vibrations, fell on tracks and caused the derailment of a packed A train, Local 100 and the supervisors union blamed the MTA — but pointedly, not Gov. Cuomo. While transit workers guided rattled passengers to safety through a smoky dark beneath Harlem, Cuomo was in Albany horse-trading for the new \$4 billion Tappan Zee Bridge to be named after his father, Mario. Meanwhile, a proposal by state Senator Michael Gianaris (D-Queens) to tax millionaires to fund the subway was left on the table. The money, to be raised from wealthy residents in the MTA’s service area and by upping the state’s hotel tax by \$5, would have been devoted exclusively to the MTA’s maintenance and modernization needs.

Interestingly enough, in an era when Cuomo has fought for capping state workers’ salaries, Local 100 members received pay bumps in 2014 and again this year. The union endorsed Cuomo’s re-election bid after the contract settlement in 2014 and has stuck by his side since, despite the growing amount of shade cast in his direction.

“The governor is not shirking responsibility like some politicians. He’s out in the open, meeting this decades-old challenge head-on,” Local 100 President John Samuels said of Cuomo’s gambit to control the authority he already controls last month.

Gannon insists the union “invested a lot of resources into [its] contract campaigns” and credits Local 100’s “strongly united membership standing behind the leadership” for the raises. “Cuomo had nothing to do with the recent contract,” he said. “I’m sure the MTA had to clear the final document through him, but negotiations were strictly between us and the MTA.”

With businesses passing the buck and the transit workers’ union sitting in Cuomo’s lap, it looks as if the task of creating political pressure to address the crisis at the MTA will ultimately fall to the millions of riders suffering on the trains every day.

The way to win “meaningful improvements to the subway is to continue to beat the drum of accountability,” says the Riders Alliance’s Masha Burina. “And again, that means making sure that New Yorkers, every time that they go underground, they know that they are stepping not into just New York City territory, but they are stepping into Gov. Cuomo’s territory. He is the one who is ultimately accountable for fixing the subways. The only way we can win that is if there’s enough pressure on the governor to en-

sure that he knows that he has to satisfy the growing frustration among the ridership.”

FRUSTRATED BY YOUR COMMUTE? LET GOV. CUOMO KNOW HOW HE’S DOING BY CALLING HIS NEW YORK CITY OFFICE AT (212) 681-4580, OR HIS ALBANY OFFICE AT (518) 474-8390.

PITS OF DESPAIR: While many New Yorkers wait for trains that won’t arrive, billions have been spent on a few lavish stations.

HOW TO GET THE SUBWAYS WE DESERVE

1 TAKE CARE OF THE BASICS Showboating politicians who come around for splashy photo ops but who won’t take responsibility for the basic upkeep of our subways are useless. The system is 113 years old. It needs constant maintenance and repairs. The signal system is antiquated, which is a major factor in train delays. The MTA’s current plan is to modernize all the signals in 50 (!) years. That’s unacceptable.

2 TAX THE RICH! State Senator Michael Gianaris (D-Queens) has proposed an income tax surcharge on millionaires living within the 12 counties served by the MTA that would raise \$2 billion per year. You can fix a lot of signals with that money and give straphangers a break on future fare hikes as well. And it is only fair, given that pricey projects such as the 2nd Avenue subway and the 7 train extension have spurred real estate values in what are already some of the poshest neighborhoods in the city.

3 DEMOCRATIZE THE MTA Both New York State and City are appointocracies. How much more you will have to pay to live in a rent-stabilized apartment, increases in tuition at CUNY and SUNY colleges and hikes in water rates, to give just a few examples, are determined by unelected, nominally

independent boards that are appointed by the governor and/or the mayor. This insulates elected leaders from the blame for unpopular decisions their hand-picked appointees make. The MTA runs on the same principle and the results have not been pretty.

So why not have the MTA Board be directly elected by the people of the New York City area? Surely an elected board would be more responsive to the riding public than the current one. Would an elected board be prone to short-term thinking and an unwillingness to make tough decisions that ensure the long-term health of the system? Maybe. But that’s what we’ve had for decades. Let’s try something different.

In the meantime, the best vehicle for empowering commuters is the six-year-old Riders Alliance (ridersny.org). It recruits members at subway stations, bus stops and community meetings and turns them into transit activists who work to hold public officials accountable.

4 COMMUNITY AND WORKERS UNITE Since its founding in the 1930s, Transport Workers Union Local 100 has been one of the city’s most militant, left-leaning unions. In 2011, the 41,000-member local was the first union in New York City to throw its support behind Occupy Wall Street and the movement of the 99 percent. In 2014, Gov. Cuomo helped deliver a favorable contract settlement to TWU at a time when he was forcing other public sector unions to accept years of wage freezes. The union endorsed Cuomo’s re-election bid and has repaid the gov-

ernor ever since with its fealty. No one can blame TWU’s leaders for seeking to deliver for members whose hard work is essential to the functioning of the city. But the union’s relationship with the governor does come at the cost of lost opportunities for a powerful alliance between transit workers and straphangers. As for Cuomo, he has gone after other public sector workers with a vengeance in the past. If he should throw the transit workers under the bus in the future to shift blame from himself, where will they be?

5 TWO TERMS IS ENOUGH When Gov. Cuomo was up for re-election in 2014, he received an unexpectedly spirited challenge in the Democratic primary from progressive law professor Zephyr Teachout. She won half the counties in the state and over a third of the total vote. However, Cuomo swamped her in New York City and the surrounding suburban counties assured his victory. For their loyalty to Cuomo, NYCers have been repaid with the back of his hand. If Cuomo gets another strong primary challenge, let’s be the wiser for it. Otherwise, getting him to pay attention to the subway system will become even harder in a third term that will unfold in the cornfields of Iowa if Cuomo turns his attention to a much talked about 2020 presidential run.

— JOHN TARLETON

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

12 ISSUES FOR ONLY \$25
MAILED STRAIGHT TO YOUR HOME
EVERY MONTH

INDYPENDENT.ORG/SUBSCRIBE

OR SEND A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER TO THE
INDYPENDENT/388 ATLANTIC AVE., 2ND FL./BROOKLYN,
NY 11217

THE INDYPENDENT

**\$\$\$ Trillions \$\$\$
for Wars and
the Pentagon**

OR

**Money For
Schools,
Health Care & Jobs**

The choice is very clear!

Donald Trump wants to drastically increase already-overstuffed Pentagon war spending by 10%. He claims our military is "depleted." But, like many of his lies, the real truth is the United States already spends more on war than the military budgets of the next seven countries combined and Pentagon budgets are the highest they've ever been!

The U.S. will spend almost \$650 billion this year alone on war and preparing for war. Trump's budget would increase it to nearly \$700 billion, getting the money by slashing funds for *diplomacy* at the State Department, decimating the EPA and education budgets and making drastic cuts to vital public programs, crippling the social safety net.

Trump's budget is a dire threat to world peace, the environment and our quality of life unlike any we've seen!

~~Social Security~~
~~The Environment~~
~~Medicare~~
~~Medicaid~~
~~Health Care~~
~~Jobs Programs~~
~~Housing~~
~~Libraries~~
~~Schools~~
~~Diplomacy~~

**We Need Jobs, Homes And Decent Schools -
Not Endless Wars And
Bloated Pentagon Budgets!**

CALL YOUR REP's & SENATORS NOW—

Tell them: NO MORE WARS—Fund human needs
NOT the Pentagon. NO TRUMP WAR BUDGET!

(877) 762-8762

Brooklyn For Peace



brooklynpeace.org • (718) 624-5921 • bfp@brooklynpeace.org

REVEREND BILLY & THE STOP SHOPPING CHOIR

"A FRESH INJECTION

OF RADICAL LOVE."

- THE VILLAGE VOICE



THURSDAY | JULY 27TH | 7:30 | FREE

‘THE FINISH LINE IS NOT IN SIGHT’

NAOMI KLEIN TALKS ABOUT TRUMP’S ELECTION, FAKE NEWS, DECOLONIZING THE DEMOCRATS AND WHY A POSITIVE VISION OF WHAT WE’RE FIGHTING FOR IS CRUCIAL



EMILY GAGE

INTERVIEW BY JOHN TARLETON

Donald Trump’s election to the presidency has prompted an outpouring of protest and activism from millions of people, including many who had not been politically engaged before. But what will it take for “the resistance” to not only defeat Trump but push forward a transformative agenda to address the multiple crises of our time?

In her best-selling new book, *No Is Not Enough: Resisting Trump’s Shock Politics And Winning The World We Need*, Naomi Klein draws from her previous books on corporate branding, the politics of climate change and the history of neoliberal elites around the world using moments of profound crisis to advance unpopular policies. With hindsight, her work over the past two decades anticipates in many ways the rise of a rightwing reality television star who wants to dismantle democratic institutions and burn as much fossil fuels as possible.

“It’s like bad fiction it’s so obvious,” Klein told *The Independent*.

In *No Is Not Enough*, she doesn’t shy away from showing how Trump emerged from a decaying political culture to seize power, or warning that the worst is yet to come. But she refuses to wallow in despair, arguing instead that the oppositional forces conjured up by Trump have a unique opportunity to build a much more just and humane world than anything we have seen before — provided we fight not only what we’re against but what we’re for. This interview has been condensed and lightly edited for length and clarity.

JOHN TARLETON: *This book begins with a scene from the night of Trump’s election in which you are meeting with a group of prominent activists in Australia. The meeting gradually runs out of steam as people in the room watch the election results come in over their phones. Can you describe how you got from that moment of shock and horror to producing this book, which is ultimately quite hopeful?*

NAOMI KLEIN: (Laughs) Slowly, I would say. I think that day the only emotion I could compare Trump’s election to was a feeling that many of us involved in the anti-corporate globalization movement had after 9/11. We had been part of this movement where there was a lot of forward momentum and a deepening of analysis and an opening of new political spaces, and then just this kind of instant feeling that all of those spaces were going to be shut down. A lot of us projected that political moment into Trump’s election. But, I think we gave him more power than he actually has.

There are a lot of political spaces where it is possible for progress to happen whether at the sub-national level in the United States, internationally or just in movement spaces. I think there was a slow process of realizing that this did not necessarily have to be a repeat of a closing off political progress. There are ways in which the assumption that from now on we’re only playing defense is true and unavoidable, but there are also ways in which it is not necessarily the case.

You assert that Trump’s election is not an aberration but the fulfillment of 50 years of historical events.

What could be a more obvious outcome of a culture that has turned consumption into a way of life and fetishizes the rich and dominance-based logic — power over other people, over the planet, over nature at every level — than to have Donald Trump become president of the United States? It’s like bad fiction it’s so obvious, which is why I wanted to question this language of shock being used about Trump’s election.

There’s a way in which accepting the idea that he comes as a shock ab-solves the broader culture of a shared responsibility in creating a context where Trump could succeed politically. And that goes from philanthro-capitalism to commercial news turning itself into reality television before Trump showed up to play so successfully in that domain because this is his world. But he’s not the one who turned news into reality TV. Cable news did that. So that’s why I don’t spend a lot of time in the book psychologizing Trump. I want to look at the trends that produced him because an even more dangerous version of Trump could rise to the fore. There are folks who are more racist than him out there who might decide to occupy that space.

Have you been surprised by the size and scope of the resistance to Trump?

“THIS IS THE MOMENT OF DEEPLY INTERSECTIONAL POLITICS AND ORGANIZING. THE ONLY SOLUTIONS THAT ARE VIABLE ARE ONES THAT TACKLE MULTIPLE PROBLEMS.”

The grassroots resistance has been really inspiring and is the result of very powerful organizing around immigrant rights, against anti-black violence and racism and for climate justice and a living wage that was going on in the years before the election. There were the beginnings of a sturdy movement infrastructure that, in turn, became the infrastructure responding to the first wave of attacks from the Trump administration, whether it was the Muslim travel ban, attacks on climate scientists and so on.

What do you make of the emphasis that some Trump critics are placing on Russia, Comey, impeachment, etc. Is this a fruitful path to go down?

While there’s certainly a lot of people in the resistance who are very concerned about this, I think that’s been more of a top-down focus coming from the Democratic Party establishment and coming from cable news for whom Trump is crack. Absolutely nothing has been learned, either by cable news or the Democratic Party establishment. They are all still following the same losing, dangerous, toxic formula. The Democrats seem to be planning to run a “vote for us so we can impeach Trump” campaign in 2018, which is just doubling down on the “vote for us because we’re not Trump” strategy that lost them the election

in 2016. It doesn’t propose anything inspiring to energize the millions and millions of Americans who don’t vote and didn’t vote.

How do you think people who want to see change through the electoral process should engage with the Democrats?

The Democratic Party establishment is entirely enmeshed with the interests and culture of the billionaire class, as Bernie Sanders calls them. I think there are very powerful people in the Democratic Party who would rather lose elections than stand with the masses of people for whom they’ve shown they have complete contempt. But that doesn’t mean necessarily that the Democratic Party cannot be taken over.

It’s certainly hard. I’m not sure it can be done. But being in contact with folks who are very involved in the Jeremy Corbyn campaign and who were really on the front lines of the process of radically changing the Labour Party, I know that they had to fight at absolutely every turn and face attacks well above what the Bernie folks faced within the DNC. But yet they won. They won by starting a movement that led tremendous numbers of young people and others to become members of the Labour Party and vote for the candidate that they wanted as party leader. They then had to repel coup attempt after coup attempt from party elites.

The process of taking over a party that has been colonized by neoliberalism and by the interests of economic elites who do not want to change is in an extremely difficult one. Anybody who’s waiting to hear “oh you guys were right after all” — it’s not going to go down that way. But that doesn’t mean it’s not worth fighting. It just means you have to approach it as a battle for the soul of, not just the party, but the country.

The vision you put forward in your book under the rubric of the Leap Manifesto is in many ways a 21st Century version of social democracy with higher taxes on the rich to finance generous public social programs, infrastructure and a full transition to a low-carbon economy. In the past generous social welfare programs such as the New Deal have often been marred by exclusionary practices that channeled more resources to favored racial or ethnic groups. What could be done to ensure this doesn’t happen again?

This is the moment of deeply intersectional politics and organizing. The only solutions that are viable are ones that tackle multiple problems, multiple crises, overlapping crises, simultaneously. If we don’t fight to make sure that the communities that have been most ravaged by this system are first in line to benefit from this transition, then the opposite will be the case. There will be a process of re-victimization and deepening of economic exclusion. Already solar panels are being manufactured by prison labor. Prisoners in California are fighting wildfires caused by climate change. Many of the jobs being created in the green economy are precarious, non-union, not paying a living wage. We have to make sure that deep principles of justice inform how we change.

Going back to the role of the press, Trump and his administration have repeatedly launched attacks against establishment media organizations such as the New York Times, Washington Post and CNN among others for purveying “fake news.” These attacks are often unfair if not unbinged from reality. How should the left respond given that it has long criticized

these same media institutions for serving as mouthpieces for powerful corporate interests?

I think just because Trump is attacking traditional or corporate media as fake news doesn’t mean that they deserve our blanket defense. We certainly need to be defending the principles of a free and independent press, but we don’t have that. We should take a posture of defend and transform, sort of like with Obamacare. Just as this is the moment to be putting forward a vision of single-payer health insurance, it is also the moment of putting forward a vision of a truly democratic, non-commercially driven independent media. Corporate media was never acceptable to us and its failures are what created openings for Trump.

They don’t appear to have learned much.

They gave us Trump. And I frankly believe that through their own greed they are creating conditions to keep him in power, rather than doing real journalism about the conspiracies in plain view.

There’s been so little coverage of his economic agenda, of the myriad broken promises he made to American workers. That is where he is so much more vulnerable than on Russia. There is almost no issue-based reporting, which is exactly what was missing from the campaign. They have spent almost no time unpacking what policy means to people’s lived experience. This is a basic job of journalism. Yet, it’s still not happening in favor of following the same formula of reality TV, which is great for ratings and terrible for democracy.

At times it feels like years have gone by since the inauguration when we’re still in the early days of this administration. How can people stay grounded and emotionally healthy so they don’t burn out?

Part of the reason why it is so important to save some space to carve out a forward-looking agenda that is really about the world that we deeply want and need is that vision is deeply healing and sustaining in these very difficult and unavoidable battles.

Every sturdy revolutionary social movement has had that forward-looking vision — the dream as Martin Luther King said. In South Africa, the vision laid out by the Freedom Charter sustained the anti-apartheid struggle all those years, that utopian imagination of the world beyond the nightmare. I think that it sustains us in these long struggles that, if we are to be honest, are going to take our lifetimes. This is not just a four-year battle. Not when we’re talking about the level of deep change that is required. The finish line isn’t in sight. So we have to find a way to sustain ourselves. And I think when we have that vision in sight, it also, to some extent, informs how we treat each other in struggle. It forces us to think long-term about the planet, about future generations, but also about our relationships with one another. We’re in this for the long haul and we have to act like it.

75 YEARS FOR PROTESTING IN BLACK?

INAUGURAL PROTESTERS SAY THEY FACE TRUMPED UP CHARGES

BY ALEX KANE

Olivia Alsip found herself trapped. The 24-year-old activist traveled to the nation's capitol from Chicago to express her ire against Donald Trump's antagonistic rhetoric targeting minorities and queer people on Inauguration Day. By 11 a.m. that morning, though, she found herself kettled with hundreds of other protesters with no way to go to the bathroom, eat or drink.

At one point, Alsip told *The Independent*, Washington, D.C. police indiscriminately pepper-sprayed the crowd, hitting a child and someone on crutches. Six hours later, Alsip was handcuffed and taken in a police van with other demonstrators to a D.C. jail.

The whole experience “felt like being in a cattle car of some sort and being treated as livestock and bodies, rather than actual people,” said Alsip.

Her troubles did not end when she was released the next evening. Instead, Alsip and over 200 other demonstrators are now facing felony charges that could carry up to 75 years in prison if they are convicted. The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, which reports to Attorney General Jeff Sessions, is prosecuting the case.

Civil liberties advocates say that the demonstrators are being overcharged in an attempt to intimidate them into accepting plea bargains and in order to silence future dissent. They also say that the police response was brutal — and that the prosecutors' charges, which seek to tar the demonstrators as criminals regardless of their individual actions, are a worrying sign of how protests are being treated in today's America.

Jan. 20 was always going to be a confrontational day. Trump was to assume the presidency after a contentious presidential campaign filled with nasty, racist attacks on Muslims and Mexicans. Trump lost the popular vote and activists streaming into Washington that day weren't about to let him forget that.

What was surprising to many protesters was the dramatic police response. A minority of the thousands of demonstrators on the street set fire to a limousine and smashed storefront windows. Instead of focusing manpower on property destruction, police riot squadrons cordoned off the protesters and kept them in the street for hours.

Police pepper-sprayed peaceful protesters “without issuing a warning or command” and indiscriminately launched explosive devices called “stingers” at the crowd, according to a report by the D.C. Police Complaints Board, which also noted that officers swept many people into custody merely because of their proximity to property destruction — not on the basis of probable cause.

Among those arrested were legal observers and reporters, including former *Indy* contributor Aaron Cantú. Charges were eventually dropped against most

of the journalists swept up by police, but Cantú still faces charges of felony rioting.

Once in custody, some detainees were subjected to sexual abuse, a lawsuit filed in June by the American Civil Liberties Union alleges. Two of the four plaintiffs in the case, which accuses the Metropolitan Police of violating protesters' First Amendment rights, say officers performed invasive anal cavity searches on them while other officers stood by laughing.

The aggressive police response to the demonstrations began even before Jan. 20, when according to court documents, an undercover D.C. cop infiltrated planning meetings for Disrupt J20, the group organizing the inaugural protests. An organizer's house was later raided in an effort to gather information for the criminal case against the demonstrators.

With the first of the trials for the Disrupt J20 demonstrators set for March 2018, there remains scant evidence to substantiate the severity of the charges against the activists. Only a handful of defendants named in the indictment are accused of committing acts of rioting. The rest of the indictment refers to “members of the conspiracy” to riot. Little evidence is offered other than that the alleged conspirators wore dark clothing, similar to outfits worn by black bloc brigades whose anti-capitalist presence at demonstrations is associated with property destruction. The indictment notes that protesters chanted, “Fuck capitalism,” among other slogans.

“This is First Amendment activity that is being criminalized,” said Sam Menefee-Libey, a member of Dead City Legal Posse, a group of activists supporting the arrested protesters. “It's incredibly disturbing.”

The arrests and subsequent indictments appear to correspond to the Trump-era pattern of a shock-and-awe gambit followed by confusion and disarray. Despite the gravity of the charges, many of the defendants are banding together, instead of informing on one another, which they believe the prosecutors want. Over 100 have signed a pledge refusing to cooperate with prosecutors against other defendants.

“Part of the [prosecutors'] tactics have to do with getting people to roll on each other . . . to make false confessions,” said Alexei Wood, a freelance photographer and one of the defendants who signed the “points of unity” statement. “That doesn't feel like justice to me at all. I

want to be out about being in solidarity with everybody.”

Yet, advocates are concerned that President Trump's “law and order” message, combined with his contempt for dissent, could mean an intensified police and prosecutorial response to future demonstrations.

“We expect the Trump administration to be much more harsh for protesters, for people who dissent and for those who defend those who dissent,” Ria Thompson-Washington Executive Vice-President of the National Lawyers Guild told *The Indy*. “The J20 charges are an indicator for what will happen when other cases like these arise.”

Thompson-Washington has noticed an uptick in calls for the National Lawyers Guild to send legal observers to monitor police behavior at protests and marches “that ordinarily wouldn't have needed that protection because [protest organizers] have to worry about people getting arrested.”

State lawmakers in the Trump era are also taking it upon themselves to squelch dissent. In response to the recent upsurge in activism across the country, Repub-

THE FUTURE IS NOT WRITTEN:

More than 200 people who were arrested during Inauguration Day protests against Donald Trump face felony charges that could land them in prison for many decades.

Continued on page 17

THE J20 VIDEO THE FEDS DON'T WANT YOU TO SEE

Prosecutors are seeking a protective order in the trial of 217 protesters apprehended in mass arrests during Inauguration Day protests in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 20. The order would prohibit the defendants from sharing evidence provided to them by prosecutors with the media.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Jennifer Kerkhoff filed for the protective order in June after an earlier version of this article, published online, contained previously unreleased police body camera video of Metropolitan Police officers brutalizing demonstrators.

Kerkhoff “expressed anger in court after body camera footage showing police attacking demonstrators appeared in an article by the *The Independent*,” the website Unicorn Riot, covering the pretrial discovery hearings, reported. “Kerkhoff introduced a motion to forbid defendants from sharing any discovery video under threat of being held in contempt of court, a measure which could prevent evidence from being gathered for future civil suits.”

The *Independent* did not reveal the source of the video and has no plans to do so. Aside from the defendants and their advocates, members of the Metropolitan Police and prosecuting at-

torneys also had access to the evidence.

Judge Lynn Leibovitz is expected to rule on the motion this month. The defendants — who are facing up to 75 years in prison on charges of rioting and conspiracy to riot apparently based on evidence as thin as the color of the clothing they wore — are not slated to stand before a jury until March of 2018.

Reached by phone, veteran civil rights attorney Martin Stolar called the motion for the protective order “pure intimidation,” noting that if there was no previous gag in place than anybody was free to share the video. In order to support the order, prosecutors have to show necessity. “The only necessity would be that [publicizing the evidence] interferes with their ability to get a fair jury,” Stolar said. “Since the trial is about a year away, I don't see how that would be a problem.”

The fact that Kerkhoff is resorting to such tactics “tells me she's got no case,” Stolar added.

— INDEPENDENT STAFF

VISIT INDYDEPENDENT.ORG TO WATCH THE FOOTAGE THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T WANT YOU TO SEE.



PETER RUGH

Introducing



**New, Fresh Content
For New York's 99%**

Streaming Now At

WBAI.ORG/PODCAST

SUBSCRIBE THROUGH ITUNES!

@WBAI PODCAST



BUILDING RESISTANCE ON TRUMP ISLAND

STATEN ISLAND UNION LOCAL PROPELS A GROWING LABOR-COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

BY JANE LATOUR

Staten Island, the whitest and most suburban of New York's five boroughs, has a reputation as the most right-wing part of the city. Its voters provided the margins that put Rudolph Giuliani and Michael Bloomberg in office as mayor. Last November, Donald Trump won 57 percent of the borough's vote, while he was getting barely 15 percent in the rest of the city. It was Staten Island cops who killed Eric Garner in 2014, and a Staten Island grand jury that wouldn't indict the one who choked him, sparking weeks of Black Lives Matter protests across the city.

Since the 45-day Verizon strike in the spring of 2016, however, progressive labor unions and community organizations on the island have united in a coalition called Sustainable Staten Island. The coalition's participants include Communications Workers of America Local 1102, the New York State Nurses Association, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 726, the Professional Staff Congress, the American Postal Workers Union, and grassroots groups such as Staten Island Peace Action and Move Forward Staten Island.

The strike, in which 40,000 Verizon workers on the East Coast walked out to demand better pay and to stop the company's plans to outsource work to low-paying overseas contractors, succeeded with a combination of worker solidarity and community support. The office of Local 1102, which represents Verizon technicians on Staten Island, is now one of the hot spots of community organizing in the borough. Its meeting room is covered with hand-drawn posters from picket lines, marches and rallies. The centerpiece is the "Wall of Honor" banner. It features dates and notches — each one marking a day of the strike — and photos of customers who picketers convinced to turn away from entering a Verizon store. It also shows red-shirted strikers marching to a hotel that was letting strikebreakers convene in its parking lot, standing silently outside while a CWA delegation met with the hotel's management, and walking back to the local triumphant after the scabs were sent packing.

who have to cope with abuse every day frustrates and motivates him.

"The real message is — we don't have to take this," he says.

Local 1102, after a seven-year struggle, also represents workers at the E-Z Pass customer-service call center in Staten Island. E-Z Pass workers asked it for help in late 2008, and voted narrowly in 2009 to join Local 1102, but the Xerox subsidiary that had taken over the contract challenged the election results and refused to bargain. It brought in Jackson Lewis, one of the nation's most notorious union-busting law firms; fired 14 union supporters; and switched the workers' pay from hourly wages to per-call rates. Xerox eventually recognized the union in 2010 and signed a first contract in 2011, but continued its anti-union campaign. Before it signed a second contract in 2015, it held captive-audience meetings with workers and tried to get Local 1102 decertified.

"It's a hard fight and we are still up against it," Lawton says. "But this is their first experience of working with union folks and good leadership is now showing up."

COMMUNITY VOICES

The union realized it needed to connect with people outside its own members on broader issues. "Our educational system doesn't teach things like redlining of neighborhoods by banks and insurance companies, or about systematic racism and inequality," CWA shop steward Joe Tarulli said at a Sustainable Staten Island public forum on economic inequality on June 22. "The main goal ... is to get people out of their silos and to develop empathy. Sustainable SI helps to open peoples' eyes to see the issues that need to be addressed and then get to work."

"I wanted to lift up my brothers," John McBeth of Occupy the Block said after speaking about growing up in the West Brighton projects and returning to Staten Island after a tour of duty in the Navy. Occupy the Block is a volunteer group whose members come from the North Shore neighborhoods and turn out two nights a week during the summer to provide a calming presence in the streets, offering support and guidance to troubled youth. "The idea behind Occupy the Block, is that you continue working with your organization, but also work with others — with us," says McBeth, who is also a deacon at local St. Philip's Baptist Church. "We use our bodies — we do it ourselves. This is our community. Do the work and the resources will come."

Gonzalo Mercado, executive director of La Colmena, a community organization that works with day laborers and other low-wage workers, described how immigrant workers fleeing economic devastation in their homelands find themselves toiling as many as

80 hours a week, enduring high rates of injury and death on the job while struggling to support themselves. "There are no legal ways for people to come to the United States and employers like it like this, since it makes it easier to exploit these workers," he told the forum.

Members of Staten Island Peace Action described a flurry of recent actions they had been involved in — an April 29 climate-change march down the boardwalk from South Beach to Midland Beach that drew more than 500 people, handing out flyers at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal about how federal tax dollars are disproportionately used for military expenditures and a rally at the United Nations for a treaty to ban nuclear weapons.

"It's tricky to get people involved in these global issues," said Ashley Santangelo. The group also gives talks at local high schools about alternatives to entering the military.

"It's important for labor to be involved and to come together with our community partners. In this way, our impact is broader," Steve Lawton says. "Economic, workplace rights, human rights and environmental rights are all connected. The same principles of liberty and freedom apply and we can't limit our fight for these rights to the halls of our legislatures."

OUT OF THE SINGLE-ISSUE SILO: Steve Lawton, president of CWA Local 1102.



ELIA GRAN

'WE DON'T HAVE TO TAKE THIS'

Local 1102 President Steve Lawton says his experience with Occupy Wall Street expanded his vision of how things could be different. A native of New Jersey, Lawton moved to Staten Island 20 years ago for a job at Verizon. He has been a shop steward, business agent, organizer, and executive board member of the 412-member local. Now he is serving his first term as its president. His road to union activism began when he saw his co-workers being mistreated and his rebel instincts kicked in. The stoicism of working people

SOME PLACES YOU CAN FIND

THE INDYPENDENT

BELOW 14TH ST

SEWARD PARK LIBRARY
192 EAST BROADWAY

HAMILTON FISH LIBRARY
415 E. HOUSTON ST.

LES PEOPLE’S FEDERAL
CREDIT UNION
39 AVENUE B

TOMPKINS SQUARE
LIBRARY
331 E. 10TH ST.

BLUESTOCKINGS
172 ALLEN ST.

THEATER FOR THE NEW
CITY
155 FIRST AVE.

MCNALLY JACKSON BOOKS
52 PRINCE ST.

4TH STREET CO-OP
58 E. 4TH ST.

THINK COFFEE
248 MERCER ST.

FILM FORUM
209 W. HOUSTON ST.

HUDSON PARK LIBRARY
66 LEROY ST.

CINEMA VILLAGE
22 E. 12TH ST.

LGBT CENTER
208 W. 13TH ST.

14TH TO 96TH ST

(CIVIC HALL
118 W. 22ND ST. 12TH FL.)

EPIPHANY LIBRARY
228 E. 23RD ST.

MUHLENBERG LIBRARY
209 W. 23RD ST.

TACO BANDITO
325 8TH AVE.

COLUMBUS LIBRARY
942 TENTH AVE.

MANHATTAN
NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK
537 W. 59TH ST.

ST. AGNES LIBRARY
444 AMSTERDAM AVE.

96TH ST. LIBRARY
112 E. 96TH ST.

ABOVE 96TH ST.

SAVOY BAKERY
170 E. 110TH ST.

MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS
LIBRARY
2900 BROADWAY

HARRY BELAFONTE 115TH
ST. LIBRARY
203 W. 115TH

HARLEM LIBRARY
9 W. 124TH ST.

125 STREET LIBRARY
224 E. 125TH ST.

GEORGE BRUCE LIBRARY
518 W. 125TH ST.

PICTURE THE HOMELESS
104 E 126TH ST.

COUNTEE CULLEN LIBRARY
104 W. 136TH ST.

HAMILTON GRANGE
LIBRARY
503 W. 145TH ST.

THE CHIPPED CUP
3610 BROADWAY

UPTOWN SISTER’S BOOKS
W. 156TH ST. &
AMSTERDAM

FORT WASHINGTON
LIBRARY
535 W. 179TH ST.

(INWOOD LIBRARY
4790 BROADWAY)

(INDIAN ROAD CAFE
600 W. 218TH ST.)

BROOKLYN

BROOKLYN BOROUGH HALL
209 JORALEMON ST.

BROOKLYN COMMONS
388 ATLANTIC AVE.

CARROLL GARDENS
LIBRARY
396 CLINTON ST. @ UNION

COUSIN JOHN’S CAFE &
BAKERY
70 7TH AVE.

(CAFÉ MARTIN
355 5TH AVE.)

BEACON’S CLOSET
92 5TH AVE.

PACIFIC STREET LIBRARY
25 FOURTH AVE.

SUNSET PARK LIBRARY
5108 4TH AVE.

CONNECTICUT MUFFIN
429 MYRTLE AVE.

DEKALB LIBRARY
790 BUSHWICK AVE.

WYCKOFF STARR COFFEE
SHOP
30 WYCKOFF AVE.

BUSHWICK LIBRARY
340 BUSHWICK AVE. @
SIEGAL
SWALLOW CAFÉ
49 BOGART ST.

METRO COMMUNITY
LAUNDROMAT
561 METROPOLITAN AVE.

WILLIAMSBURG LIBRARY
240 DIVISION AVE.

GREENPOINT LIBRARY
107 NORMAN AVE.

KAISA’S CAFÉ
146 BEDFORD AVE.

BEDFORD LIBRARY
496 FRANKLIN AVE.

CROWN HEIGHTS LIBRARY
560 NEW YORK AVE. @
MAPLE

FLATBUSH LIBRARY
22 LINDEN BLVD. @
FLATBUSH

TUGBOAT TEA COMPANY
546 FLATBUSH AVE.

OUTPOST CAFE
1014 FULTON ST.

RED HOOK LIBRARY
7 WOLCOTT ST.

HOPE & ANCHOR
347 VAN BRUNT

JALOPY CAFÉ
317 COLUMBIA ST.

ALIGN BROOKLYN
579 5TH AVE.

SUNSET PARK LIBRARY
5108 4TH AVE.

(BAY RIDGE LIBRARY
7223 RIDGE BLVD.)

DUNWELL DONUTS
222 MONTROSE AVE.

COBRA CLUB
6 WYCKOFF

STARR BAR
214 STARR ST.

(JAMAICA BAY LIBRARY
9727 SEAVIEW AVE.)

(SPRING CREEK LIBRARY
12143 FLATLANDS AVE.)

QUEENS

COURT SQUARE LIBRARY
2501 JACKSON AVE.

LONG ISLAND CITY
LIBRARY
37-44 21ST ST.

QUEENS DIVERSITY CENTER
76-11 37TH AVE. SUITE 206

JACKSON HEIGHTS
LIBRARY
35-51 81ST ST.

BRONX

MOTT HAVEN LIBRARY
321 E. 140TH ST.

HUNT’S POINT LIBRARY
877 SOUTHERN BLVD.

THE POINT
940 GARRISON AVE.

HIGH BRIDGE LIBRARY
78 W. 168TH ST.

LATINO PASTORAL ACTION
CENTER
14 W. 170TH ST.

NEW SETTLEMENT
COMMUNITY CENTER
1501 JEROME AVE.

(NEW SITE)

WANT TO HELP
DISTRIBUTE THE INDY?
CALL 212-904-1282 OR
EMAIL CONTACT@
INDYPENDENT.ORG.

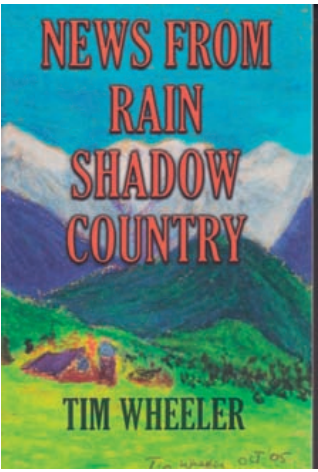


I design the Indy.
I design for change.
I can design for you.

MIKAEL TARKELA

CREATIVE DESIGN
M.TARKELA@GMAIL.COM
CARGOCOLLECTIVE.COM/MTARKELA
SPIRITOF.BANDCAMP.COM
VIMEO.COM/TARKELA

Now available from
International Publishers
www.intpubnyc.com



In this, the Centennial Year of the Great October
Revolution, International Publishers is proud to
offer this compilation of news articles written by
Tim Wheeler. For many years a writer for, and
later editor of, the Daily World and People’s World
newspapers

\$17.95

Order today via our website or call;
212-366-9816

Pay by cash, check, MO, credit or debit card.

FROM PROTEST TO POWER

Hegemony How-to: A Roadmap for Radicals
By JONATHAN MATTHEW SMUCKER
AK PRESS, 2017

By Steven Sherman

Jonathan Matthew Smucker's *Hegemony How-to: A Roadmap for Radicals* is part of a rapidly growing body of literature that seeks to harvest concrete organizing lessons from social movements' recent experiences. Whereas Becky Bond and Zack Exley's *Rules for Radicals* does this from the perspective of the Bernie Sanders campaign, and Jane McAlevey's *No Shortcuts* culls lessons from labor struggles, Smucker is most deeply influenced by the anti-corporate globalization movement of the early 2000s and Occupy Wall Street.

He draws conclusions quite critical of those movements, to the point that his publisher distances itself a little from the text in the preface. Nevertheless, this is not the familiar story of a repentant radical documenting his journey rightward in public. Instead, Smucker is thinking through the flaws, mistakes and limitations of the movements he has enthusiastically participated in, trying to come to grips with why they have not changed the world as much as he hoped, and how they might do so in the future.

The central tension he struggles with is that people become radical activists out of a desire to change the world, but often find the subculture of radicalism to be an attractive refuge from the unjust world. This undermines their capacity to connect with people outside their small subculture — but it is only by aligning themselves with substantial portions of those people that they can actually hope to change the world. Instead of this work of connection and expansion, activists often focus on winning the approval of their peers; for example, by engaging in “militant” acts of property destruction that clearly demonstrate one's commitment to the cause, but often alienate much of the public.

Similarly, he delivers a withering critique of the “prefigurative” theories that floated around the Occupy movement — that its central goal was to enact utopian social relations in Zuccotti Park and its other encampments around the world. These theories, he argues, were deluded about both what was happening in the encampments and what was politically possible, and led people away from trying to connect with organizations and constituencies that were receptive to Occupy's position but had very different structures. Smucker is influenced by theories that the prosperity of the decades after World War II led to an emphasis on psychological fulfillment rather than political struggle in social movements,

but then inserts the interesting idea that perhaps this tendency has already peaked due to the deterioration of that prosperity.

MOVING OUT OF THE RADICAL CLUBHOUSE

The slogan “We are the 99%!” indicated a desire to move past the radical-subculture mentality, but Occupy wasn't quite ready to think out all its implications as events raced forward. Smucker clearly believes that such groups must orient themselves to the wider world and develop alliances and ways of talking to the “unusual suspects” who don't necessarily show up for radical actions at first — but he also acknowledges the need to build solidarity within groups through language, rituals and the like. This is a different perspective from those armchair Marxists who simply wondered why Occupy didn't organize the working class, as if conjuring such a force arose from having the proper theory rather than the work involved in producing and maintaining an innovative tactic like the encampments.

Rather, Smucker is arguing that having conjured such a force, Occupy let its belief in prefiguration get in the way of organizing for a broader societal alignment. Much of the book lays out his alternative to prefigurative politics. Rather than speaking truth to power, he argues, social movements must pose power to power. To build that power, he offers a five-category chart — active opposition, passive opposition, neutral, passive support, active support — and suggests that social movements map out where different forces in society sit on that scale and concern themselves with moving those groups one notch closer, for example, turning passive supporters into active ones.

An important element of this is developing new ways for people to demonstrate support for the movement. He describes the way the interracial Freedom Rides during the 1960s civil-rights movement afforded white activists in the North the opportunity to demonstrate active support by participating or helping out, while pulling many of their peers and family members from the neutral category into passive support.

BETTER FORMS OF LEADERSHIP

Smucker also argues that leadership is important in order for social movements to act more strategically. Leaders, he says, should work to undermine the cliquishness that develops in movements, enable the inclusion of more marginal members and develop strategies that better connect the movement to other

constituencies in the passive or neutral categories. Rather than fostering an anti-leadership mentality, movements should promote themselves as “leaderful,” encouraging all members to develop their capacities to perform these tasks and more.

His advice on how to build wider alliances draws from such unlikely sources as dating and corporate branding. He insists on the need to craft powerful narratives, to create a “we” that can expand to include more and more people against an isolated “them.” But he insists that beyond the symbolic contest over who defines society's common sense, there is also the institutional contest over who has power and how it is exercised.

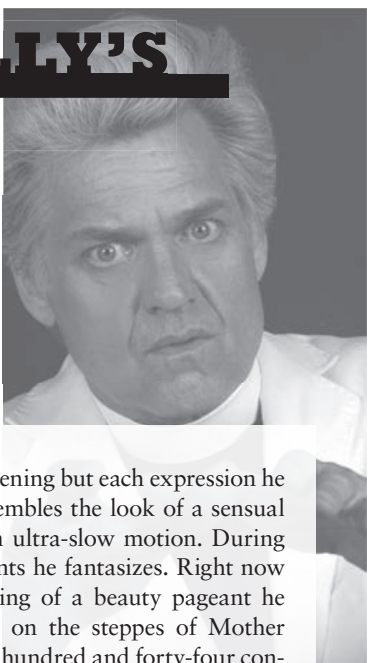
Here, however, he is much vaguer. He never really addresses the challenges posed by the electoral system, or the matrix of power progressives would confront were they to win electoral office. He encourages the left to take attaining and exercising power more seriously, citing the Chavista movement in Venezuela. That project now appears to lie in ruins, even as it remains in power. Similarly, Greece's Syriza coalition, which did everything Smucker calls for and produced a broad enough alignment to win a national election, was unable to release the country from the vise of austerity.

Although I agreed with much of the advice Smucker offers, it is difficult to not wonder whether, in a world of rapid capital flows across borders, a Prime Minister Jeremy Corbyn or a President Bernie Sanders might encounter similar difficulties. Anarchistic emphasis on developing “prefigurative” relations in the here and now developed out of a pessimism about the liberatory potential of attaining state power. The first few years in this period of renewed interest in the state-oriented approach haven't exactly proven them wrong. The “road map” gets very fuzzy depicting the terrain beyond building a coalition large and deep enough to compete for state power.



CHARLYNE ALEXIS

REVEREND BILLY'S REVELATIONS



JON QUILITY

FOR THIS ISSUE, WE CHOSE QUESTIONS FROM INDY READERS ON REVEREND BILLY'S FAVORITE SUBJECT, NUMBER 45.

*Dear Reverend Billy,
What does Trump dream about?*

— Roxie from Hoboken

DEAR ROXIE,
In his dreams, Trump faces an auditorium filled with men in suits. He has a bulge in his pants. He views a sea of unmoving faces. Suddenly the podium breaks open. Splinters fly as his phallus emerges, a cigar-shaped promontory of the purest gleaming gold. It casts a long shadow over the crowd of suits. Trump feels good about this. He stirs in his bed. A Secret Serviceman cracks the door of the bedroom to check if everything is alright. The white noise pouring from Trump's mouth is the howl of money, the fast-as-light money that flies across borders, flying into Africa, flying across the Andes, seeking the lowest possible tax rate.

The men in the audience are heaving with rapture. They are suffering a pleasureable nausea, an orgasm that is the opposite Tantric sex; an unending, hopeless ejaculation. It is the sensation of a billion dollars coming into your body. Trump wakes up. He needs to Tweet. He needs to Tweet badly. He is breathing heavily. He cries out like a child or an animal. The Secret Serviceman is shaking him, shouting something. Trump remembers that he is President of the United States. Hah! Let the dream begin!

• • •

*Dear Reverend Billy,
What do you suppose Donald and Melania talk about when they're all alone?*

*Thank you so much,
Travis, Manhattan*

DEAR TRAVIS,
Melania can talk for upwards of two hours without interruption. Trump periodically alternates his facial pose to indi-

cate he is listening but each expression he assumes resembles the look of a sensual dry heave in ultra-slow motion. During these moments he fantasizes. Right now he is dreaming of a beauty pageant he used to run on the steppes of Mother Russia. One hundred and forty-four contestants are high-kicking toward him, a chorus line advancing like a world war. Each contestant has a full bladder. Melania shakes him awake with a look on her face like she was there too. "I was not humiliated by reciting Michelle's speech!" she says. "I'm glad Steve Bannon thought it was a classic dis and hilarious. I can make a fool of myself in front of millions. It feels just like my private life!"

• • •

*Dear Reverend Billy,
Here's a question: What is Trump's favorite Care Bear?*

— Sarah in Morningside Heights

DEAR SARAH,
Animated bears are not white males. Trump hits the remote. He has a suspicious feeling about Funshine Bear. He sees cartoon characters the way the artist Andres Serrano saw Jesus Christ: Drowning in the urination of God.

Trump fires off tweets like Funshine's belly shoots light. The tweets go monstrosly viral. Trump's supporters — a living, farting trash-mass — seek out and suffocate innocent citizens who dare to speak in complete sentences. Care Bears are losers. Build a wall around them and make them pay for it.

REVEREND BILLY IS AN ACTIVIST AND POLITICAL SHOUTER, A POST-RELIGIOUS PREACHER OF THE STREETS AND BANK LOBBIES. BILLY AND THE STOP SHOPPING CHOIR WILL PERFORM ON THURSDAY, JULY 27 AT 7:30 PM AT THE BANDSHELL IN PROSPECT PARK — PART OF BRIC CELEBRATE BROOKLYN. HAVE A QUESTION FOR THE REVEREND? EMAIL REV-BILLY@INDYPENDENT.ORG OR TWEET TO @REVBILLYTALEN.

████████████████████

J20 TRIAL

Continued from page 12

lican lawmakers in 18 states have introduced bills to restrict the right to protest. In Minnesota, elected officials want to pass a bill that would increase penalties for demonstrators who block traffic. In Missouri and Washington State, lawmakers want to ban masks at protests — a prohibition that already exists in New York and other parts of the country.

Meanwhile, the inauguration protesters face a long year of traveling back and forth to

D.C. for court dates — and that's even before their trial starts.

"Obviously, it's hard to know you could be facing a lot of time," said Olivia Alsip. "We're facing a maximum of 75 years, which is multiples the amount of time I've been alive. This case isn't really about what's right and what's wrong. It's about smothering any form of dissent that occurs that's a threat to the state."

████████████████████

bluestockings
radical bookstore | activist center | fair trade cafe
172 ALLEN ST • 212-777-6028
bluestockings.com

the Air — Max Elbaum

FEMINIST THEORY

JULY 21 • 7-9:30PM
MUSIC: Kazoo Studios of the Oakland-based feminist queer band Mother & the Boards is traveling the country performing solo. A blend of folk and blues with notes of hip hop that delivers a fiery message to incite and inspire.

JULY 28 • 7-9:30PM
READING: Elizeya Quate's reads from The Face of Our Town, a collection of interconnected stories about dysphoric interconnectedness.

AUG 14 • 7-9:30PM
TALK: Javier Sethness Castro presents his updated biography of critical theorist Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Revolution, chronicling Marcuse's anti-capitalist activism and contemplating Marcuse's relevance to contemporary social struggles.

ZAPATISTA STORIES

HISTORY STATES

Law and Disorder radio

WBAI
99.5 FM

Mondays at 9am

DOWNLOAD PODCASTS
at lawanddisorder.org

"Our basic constitutional rights are in jeopardy. "Law and Disorder" is an excellent magazine format radio show, hosted by progressive lawyers who analyze the state of civil rights in this post-9/11 period. From attacks on Muslims at home to torture abroad, "Law and Disorder" puts these constitutional attacks into perspective."

—AMY GOODMAN,
HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!

Co-founded by Michael Ratner (1943-2016) President, Center for Constitutional Rights, and hosted by movement lawyers Heidi Boghosian, Executive Director, A. J. Muste Memorial Institute, and Michael Steven Smith, New York City attorney and author.

Now on Facebook.com

Celebrate Resistance

RAD EVENTS

GREAT FOOD

FB/STARRBARBK

STARR★BAR

214 Starr St L to the Jefferson stop

July/August 2017 THE INDEPENDENT

INDY SUMMER BOOKS

CHECK OUT WHAT SOME OF OUR WRITERS ARE READING

READING THE CITY ELECTRIC

"You shall possess the origin of all poems ... you shall no longer take things at second or third hand." Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* is rain-bent, dog-eared and spread like a dirty scroll in my hands. I read the Ur-poem of American Democracy loudly and walk through the city.

Nearly two centuries separate us, but reading Whitman — wow — I can feel his chest shake with wonder at the faces in front of him. I can feel his hands tingle as they touch blades of grass. See him smiling as he swipes

sweat from his neck.

Words rolled through his breath. Whitman's exhale entered the mouths of the strangers he passed and they breathed it out again for him to taste their inner lives, whether perfumed or rank. He swallowed everyone. Slave or free. Poor or rich. Man or woman. He churned them together in his belly as he stalked the city, long-bearded and ragged in denim, sniffing at the crowd like a dog.

He was in drunken-love with all of life. Reading him is like getting hammered with a friend. He casts his words into a world embrace. "All the men are also my brothers," he writes, "and the women my sisters."

Nearly two centuries later, I look up from the book and see the endless river of people flowing over the sidewalks. Dammed at red lights. Gushing at green. New York City's interlocking streets, squeezing and releasing 8 million souls though a pulsing concrete maze. Here is a slightly thugged out brotha, singing gustily a Spice Girl-song. Here's an old woman, wearing a football helmet as she carefully traces her steps. Here are tourists, unfolding a map and gawking at tall buildings.

Here we combine our singular lives into the life of the city, many cities into the nation, many nations into a civilization.

Yesterday, I saw a horse break free from its carriage.

EXPLORING BLACK GIRL MAGIC

For my favorite summer books, I picked something old, something new and something borrowed. All contain narratives of Black lives.

It has been 41 years since poet Ntozake Shange's *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf* made its Broadway premiere at the Booth Theatre in New York, but this choreopoem, a series

of poetic monologues accompanied by dance movements and music, still speaks to the tribulations of contemporary Black women. Shange creates seven characters, each represented by a color. Their dialogues and poetic monologues tackle subjects like rape, abortion, domestic violence, coming of age, sensuality, poverty, oppression, isolation and self-realization. This work is a critical expression of Black feminist struggles and honors the lived experiences of Black women in the United States.

Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body, Roxane Gay's recently released non-fiction work, is a must read. When I listened to the two-minute audio book sample, read by Gay herself, I immediately began to cry. "This is not a weight-loss memoir," Gay writes. "This is not a book that will offer motivation."

Hunger deals with Gay's rape, her overeating and her struggles with identity. It also tells the quirky story of a woman from a Haitian family

who is finding her way as a writer in Middle America. The text is deeply moving and painstakingly honest. It is also funny in the details. I had no idea Gay was a nerd girl who frequented IRC (Internet Relay Chat), an old-school online messaging platform, or that she became a phone sex worker to support herself after dropping out of pre-med at Yale. I follow Gay on Twitter and frequently read her tweets but this memoir created a deeper intimacy that I didn't know I

BIG SOLUTIONS FOR INTRACTABLE PROBLEMS

Utilitarian block towers in the style of Le Corbusier fell out of fashion after Jane Jacobs wrote her seminal book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Jacob's quaint mid-century Greenwich Village, a low-rise neighborhood with vibrant sidewalk life and older, architecturally similar buildings forming a cohesive sense of place was the ideal. Greenwich Village's townhouses nowadays are some of the priciest real estate in the city but those towers still deliver affordable housing to hundreds of thousands of people.

The Jane Jacobs versus Robert Moses story has been rehashed before, but if you want a brisk read with a beautiful and informative design and images pick up *Affordable Housing in New York*, edited by Nicholas Dagen Bloom and Matthew Gordon Lasner. Full of short bios of long forgotten 20th-century housing activists and developers like Abraham Kazan, the book traces the political, architectural and social influences on New York's affordable housing stock.

Kazan, an anarcho-socialist, and Moses, a reactionary, were an odd couple, but Moses leaned on Kazan's development firm to build the now iconic Penn South coops (1962), Bronx's Coop City (1968) and Brooklyn's

Starrett City (currently marketed as Spring Creek Towers). Kazan's critics derided his buildings as exclusively Jewish (union members were by and large his target market) but today most are racially integrated and vibrant residences. There are few books, let alone one this visually stimulating, that treat social housing in such a deliberate and thought provoking manner.

Like *Affordable Housing in New York*, Bryan Bell and Katie Wakeford's *Expanding Architecture: Design as Activism* harkens to a period of socially engaged architecture and is also aesthetically pleasing. This book presents cutting-edge structures from modular homes, new suburb design and urban green buildings and ar-

A FEW DUSTY GEMS

My vacations always include an extended perusal of a good used bookshop. Thankfully we live in New York City, where a vacation can be as simple as a sojourn to a new neighborhood. The Big Reuse in Gowanus is a city unto itself, a sprawling town whose streets are delineated by piles of old-timey chachkies, grandfather clocks, vintage doors and barnwood. In one corner you'll find a virtual Strand in the miniature.

My eyes lit up when I spotted a copy of James Agee's *A Death in the Family* on those dusty shelves.

I've been on the lookout for a copy since Omar El Akkad recommended the book when I interviewed him for *The Indy's* special "Against Dystopia" issue this spring. Akkad said that what he admires about Agee is his attention to detail. That was putting it mildly. It's as if Agee was on a mission to describe the world his characters inhabit in its entirety. We're talking about extended passages on the

sounds sprinklers make as the sun sets on Knoxville, Tennessee, circa 1915.

It's a spiritual quest, as if leaving no detail excluded from the external world will somehow fasten the soul against loss and reveal new dimensions of the self, a kind of transcendence by absorption. The endless pursuit for total illumination speaks, perhaps, to the original impulse behind communication; to bridge the gap between the self and the other. The gap is inherently impermeable no matter how hard Agee tries, but at times he comes

within a hair's width of fulfilling his vocation.

It is refreshing to read a writer so dedicated to language as a mode for truth, especially these days when tweets laden with cheap adjectives from the president's account have the whole world spinning.

One writer who could do a lot with a sparse amount of space was the late Jack Collom. Collom was a teacher of mine at Naropa University and when I learned of his passing on July 2, I started combing through his writings again. Jack's po-



It galloped crazy fast between cars. We cheered its escape while a fat coachman chased after it. Sometimes a metaphor just happens like that. Sometimes you have to laugh at man chasing after nature. Everyone was happy.

"These are the thoughts of all men in all ages and lands," Whitman wrote, but I feels like he's speaking to my ear. I want to ask him how can we love the stupid greed that drives the systems that destroy so many. I want to ask him if embracing everything and everyone leaves one floating in a limbo with no moral compass. "In all people I see myself," he answers, "And the good or bad I say of myself I say of them."

Too much. Too much. I fold the book and feel like an

open mirror. Here reading is communion with spirits. Together we walk the streets. Whitman tells me that I and everyone else know more about ourselves and each other than we are willing to say — much less act upon.

Read this, he says. Read the sublime and subliminal. Read the body as a book and the book as a body. Touch. Draw from the deepest place the mysterious key. Unlock the silences between us and them.

And do what Whitman?

I look at New York in all its dirty, shitty, loud craziness. And he says, very simply, join them!

— NICHOLAS POWERS

was yearning to experience with this author.

My poet friend Adriana Greenhipped me to the Black girl magic coming from the desk of Brooklyn resident and Hugo Award winner N. K. Jemisin. Jemisin created *The Broken Earth Trilogy* — Black speculative fiction and fantasy at its best. The trilogy is made up of *The Fifth Season* (August 2015), *The Obelisk Gate* (August 2016) and *The Stone Sky* (coming in

August). The series brings readers into a world called "The Stillness"; a land long familiar with catastrophe, where the power of the earth is wielded as a weapon and where there is no mercy. Jemisin creates diverse complex characters who will stretch your imagination and challenge your worldviews. She uses beautiful prose to build worlds that challenge ideas of racism, sexism, patriarchy and other systemic power structures. This is

the sci-fi that will help you understand and escape the crazy world we are living in.

— JAMARA WAKEFIELD

gues for socially inclusive housing connected to community needs and assets.

One clear and increasingly present danger to our architecture, socially engaged or not, is global climate change, which portends rising sea levels, more intense hurricanes and storms and an increase in extremely hot days. It is such an immense problem that it is tempting to throw your hands up and say we are all doomed. Take heart, climate activist Jeremy Brecher thinks that if humanity caused the problem then it can mitigate the worst damage. His *Against Doom, A Climate Insurgency Manual* is a hopeful plan of action to prevent a catastrophic climate bust. Brecher explores various pathways to challenge big

fossil fuels' grip on politics and the economy. In the wake of President Trump's intent to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate accords, it is incumbent on cities and states to enact their own plans. The key is building public pressure to enforce those plans in order to meet targeted emissions reductions.

There is hope and action everywhere. The valiant Keystone XL and Dakota pipeline resistance showed the emergence of diverse coalitions ready to take militant action to prevent deepening fossil fuel reliance. We are racing against the clock, so read *Against Doom* and take action now.

— BENNETT BAUMER

ems are communions with nature; "the blue that rumbles under the sun bounding the pearl that we walk on," as he puts it in his poem "Ecology."

Whereas Agee uses the word to describe the world, Jack plays in the world through the word. It all comes together vividly just the same.

For a city poet, check out Robert Fullerton. He's not in print to my knowledge but a new short film, *Mining for Poems and Ode*, features him reciting his work and describing life

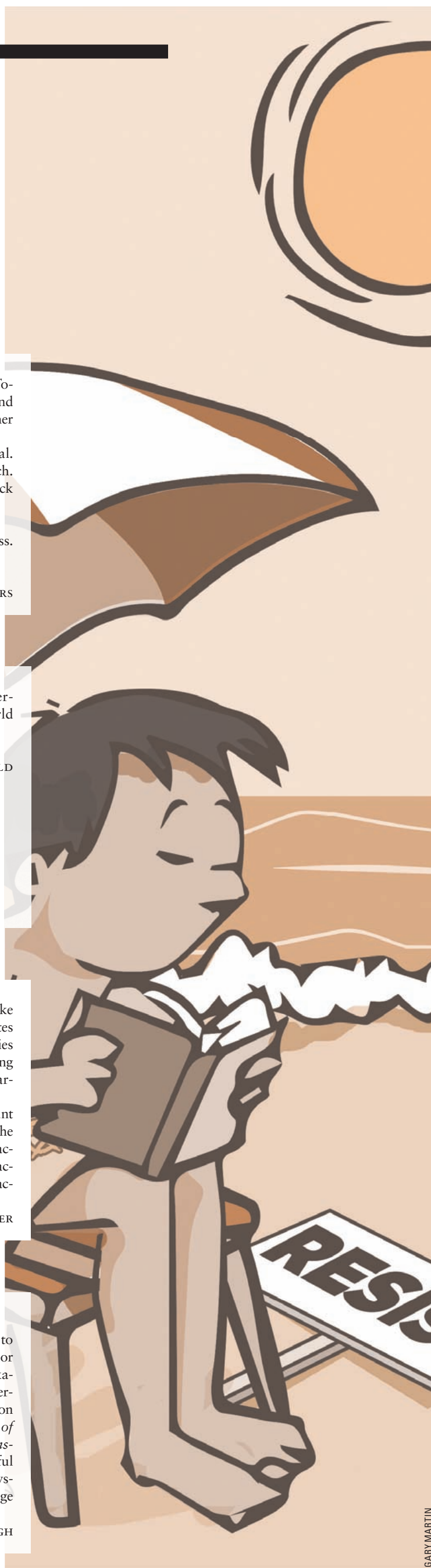
on the Glasgow docks he worked as a young man in the 70s. *Das Capital* and *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropist* were required reading.

I'd never heard of the latter but again the gods of chance that govern used bookstores worked in my favor and guided me to it on a recent visit to Myopic Books in Chicago. It's plain to see why those hardboiled dockworkers shoved the book in young Fullerton's hands. The novel pans servile members of the working class just

as much as their greedy exploiters.

There you have it, some pages to turn whether you're at the beach or waiting for the A train to Far Rockaway to arrive. In case you're wondering why it hasn't showed up, Clifton Hood's *722 Miles: The Building of the Subways and How They Transformed New York* provides colorful background on the origins of our dysfunctional subway system (See page 4).

— PETER RUGH



SEE MORE OF MNN THAN EVER BEFORE.

No one tells the story of New York better than New Yorkers, and now the story just got bigger. Presenting MNN's HD Community Channel: We built this channel specifically for MNN Community Producers to tell their stories. Love stories, documentary stories, action stories, BIG stories. Join us at MNN HD on Time Warner Cable channel 1993 for the biggest New York stories there are - the story of your life.

AMPLIFIED
LOCAL VOICES

**TIME WARNER CABLE
CHANNEL 1993**

HD
MNN

STREAMING WORLDWIDE ON MNN.ORG